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SHOCK CINEMA

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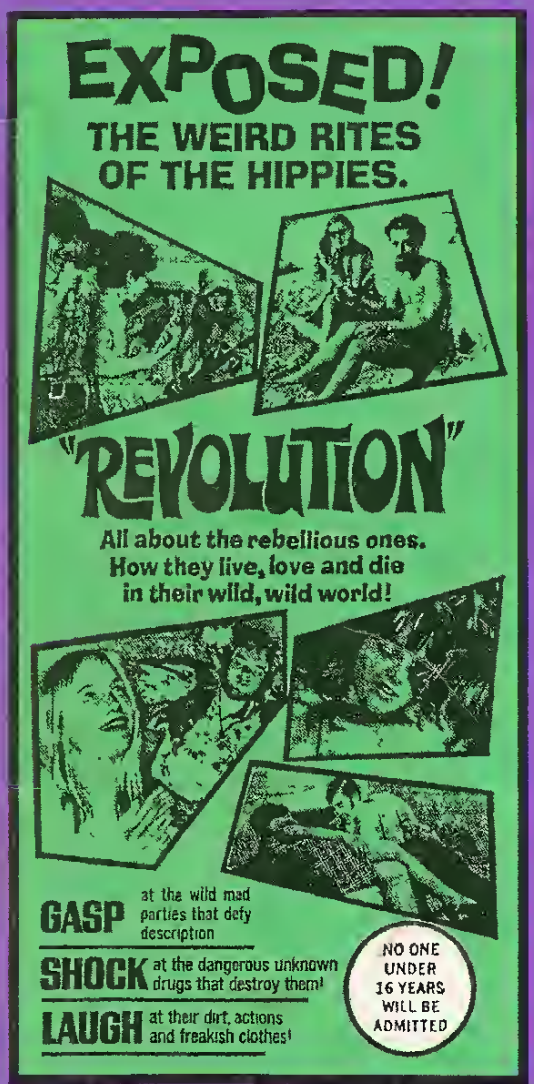

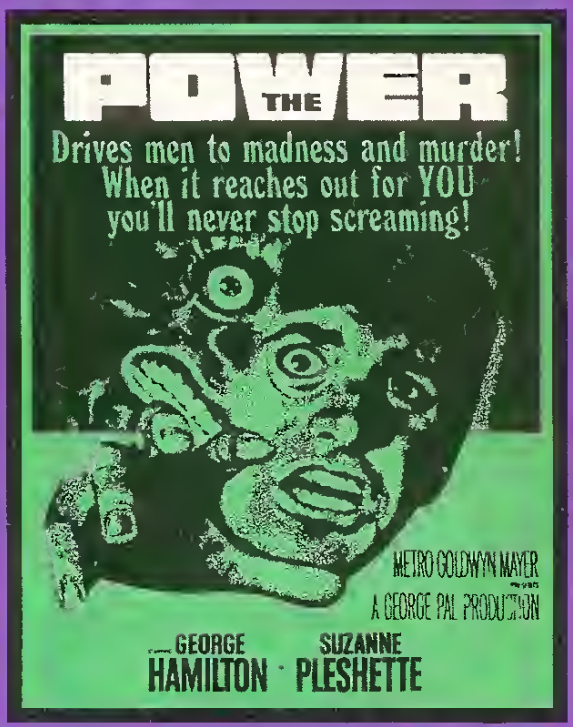

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EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS

Welcome to another issue of SHOCK CINEMA, the review mag that digs up the obscurities and doesn't suck up to anybody (unless they're rich or intluential---hey, nobody's perfect). First off, I've got to thank all of the readers who came through when I asked, in the previous issue, to keep my advertisers happy by purchasing lots of their videos (and always remembering to name drop SHOCK CINEMA, of course). According to several of my advertisers, the response was terrific, and because of that type of consumer dedication, SC will be able to pollute bookstores and mailboxes for quite awhile...I owe you all a beer...

SUBSCRIPTIONS / BACK ISSUES: Single issues are $5 apiece (with checks/money orders made payable to the big kahuna, Steve Puchalski. In other words, please do NOT put the name of the mag on your checks, OK?) and a three-issue subscription is still $12 (so get a sub now, before I sober up and realize that I'm selling myself short). As usual, subscribers can keep track ot when to renew by checking the upper right corner ot their mailing label, which lists the last issue they'll be receiving...As for overseas readers, single issues are $8 apiece...When it comes to back issues, if you missed out on #1 - 5 you're out of luck, but 6 -9 are still available. 6 and 7 are $4 apiece, while the new 'n' improved 8 and 9 are the usual $5. Get 'em now, because after years of having these boxes piled high in our apartment, they're finally running low.

Several readers have been writing to me recently, asking "Where can I locate these movies?" To make that search a little easier, I've tried to list my source at the outset of each review, while many can be obtained trom more than one of the distributors listed on Page 39. Unfortunately, a number ot the films I review simply *aren't* available from any current source (yes, I realize that's a bitter pill to swallow)...In other news, I'm glad to report that my first (and hopefully not last) book, SLIMETIME A GUIDE TO SLEAZY, MINDLESS MOVIE ENTERTAINMENT is slowly making its way into the crevasses of US bookstores. Unfortunately, since it's a UK import, several chains (the name starts with 'B' and ends in 'Noble') won't even touch it, and tor awhile, it was being spotted only slightly less than Bigfoot. Nowadays, it can be found (or ordered) in your cooler Tower Bookstores, from AK Press (see Page 40) and NYC's ultimate 'zine shop, See Hear...I also want send out a huge "thanks" to the readers who gave a nod to SC in the latest Video Search of Miami questionnaire, in their Favorite Fanzine category. Coming in #7 might not seem like much to some, but personally, coming in on the heels ot long-time hot shots like Psychotronic, Video Watchdog, ACC, Cult Movies, Film Threat, and ETC made me feel like the drunk, black sheep cousin, who's suddenly given a seat at the adult table on Thanksgiving.

But let's put all these insignificant details aside, and get onto the important things—*my life*. Long-time readers know that my bitch 'n' whine editorials often ramble on and on, with no great purpose, but I'll keep this one short and sweet...My problem is that I can't help but get pissed off at the changes taking place in NYC's East Village. Of course, when you live in The Village, you've got to expect a tew hassles, and my building is a perfect example. I've been in the same dingy li'l place for six years, as it transformed from a videotape-engulfed apartment for one, to an even-more-crowded home tor two. Still, you quickly learn to accept all the drawbacks of living in this hub of dysfunction. When I first moved in and gave the place a good cleaning, I discovered broken crack vials in every possible niche of the place. And for months, I had to deal with a couple of knock-down, drag-out neighbors who made Ike and Tina look like The Waltons—and who finally ditched the place after the police were called in when hubbie went psycho and busted down his own front door. Nowadays, all we have to deal with are the occasional bellows from an ex-mental patient who lives beneath us, and the incessant Broadway show-tunes blasted by the bitchy old queen next door (who occasionally sings along, and sounds exactly like Bea Arthur with a tracheotomy). It comes with the territory, right? Unfortunately, that territory is a changin'.

When I was just a tourist back in the early '80s, I crashed near Times Square (at the now-defunct Hotel Seymour), but I was always drawn to the East Village. Back in those days, once you got to 2nd Avenue, there was little to see. The rest were residences, coffee shops and the occasional junky...Well, by the early '90s, all that had changed, with more bars, more nightlife, and more white-bread, panhandling squatters—while the borders of Alphabet City became the dividing line between the residents and the ever-eastward-moving, bridge-and-tunnel tourists. Nowadays, St. Marks Place looks like one big, strip mall, while all of the residents have moved further east, into the Alphabet, for a little peace. Unfortunately, the slow migration continues, and one of the minor culprits is the Broadway show RENT (which, I've been told is as accurate a portrait of the East Village as CAN'T STOP THE MUSIC was to the disco era). Ever since they used the Life Cafe on Avenue B for one of its settings, *everyone* wants in on the act...

The bottom line? Suddenly I find myself living in the middle of *trendy* area, instead of an urban cesspool. And lemme tell you, I don't like it! I've got no problem with independent businesses, like the closet-sized clothes stores or the endless bars, whose piss-in-any-corner clientele leaves your sidewalk looking like a Mississippi Delta. But when a Blockbuster, a 24-hour Kinko's, and an upscale health club all turn up in between A and B, there's reason to worry. Most confusing, I can walk two blocks from my apartment (into what was formerly the dingier section of town), and dine on escargot at a swanky French restaurant on Avenue B. What's the world coming to? And more important, with these stores opening up and raising the property values, what are the long-time residents going to do? Just be warned, that if you're planning to move to Manhattan, you'd better cash in all of your gold fillings beforehand. If you're blessed, you'll find an Avenue A studio shitbox for a measly $800 a month—but if you want an honest-to-goodness bedroom with that, expect to lay out a Grand or more. Recently, I saw a 2BR, Avenue A apartment going for $2300! Jesus suffering fuck! For that type of cash, the place better come with a live-in French maid and bathtub full of cocaine.

Despite all of this upheaval, we'll be staying here for awhile longer. That is, unless the city gets the best of us and we move to a secluded Montana farm and begin stockpiling Bibles, automatic weapons and crate of Bushmills...Until then, read on. 3/23/97

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READERS' RECOMMENDATIONS

Note: Please query me with your ideas before sending in completed reviews.

JIM RIDLEY; Nashville, Tennessee.

IF FOOTMEN TIRE YOU, WHAT WILL HORSES DO? (1971). Quite simply, the damnedest thing I've ever seen. After a near-fatal plane crash in the late 1960s, veteran exploitation director Ron Ormond decided to dedicate his unique gifts to the service of the Lord. To this end, he hooked up with a hellfire-and-brimstone Mississippi minister, the Rev. Estes Pirkle, for a filmed version of one of Pirkle's most hair-raising sermons. The result is a deranged hybrid of fundamentalist tub-thumping, anti-communist hysteria, and exploitation elements as blatant as anything Ormond ever devised. As his parishioners quiver in terror, Pirkle lectures them in an unwavering monotone about the Red Peril—the godless Russkies, who are waging war against the followers of Christ on earth. We see God-fearing American women manhandled in their tract houses by a Russian "commissar" (played by Ormond regular Cecil Scaife in jowly sideburns, military fatigues, a red baseball cap, and a Count Chocula accent). We see parishioners herded up by soldiers on horseback and machine-gunned. We see children's eardrums pierced with bamboo spears ("so they cain't heer the werd of Gaw-uhd!"). Most shockingly, we see the Commies' insidious brainwashing techniques: forcing elderly churchgoers to sit on folding chairs in an empty lot while loudspeakers blare, "Communism is good. Communism is good. Christianity is stupid.. Christianity is stupid..." And when an adorable little tyke refuses to renounce Christ, the commissar takes a machete and lops off his head! "Duz that shock yew?" drones Pirkle. It might indeed—if the acting, sets, or special effects ever rose above the level of a reform-school production of DRUMS ALONG THE MOHAWK. But Ormond piles on the housepaint blood and the visibly breathing corpses, emerging with some unholy marriage of Jack Van Impe and Herschell Gordon Lewis. Call it a laff riot that measures on the Richter scale, but this oddity scared thousands of impressionable teens across the South into making a swan dive into the baptismal font. No wonder—it's about as subtle as Billy Graham wielding a pitchfork.

NIGHTMARE ALLEY (1947). Before you toe the usual line about Hollywood studios issuing only mainstream pabulum, check out this astonishingly cynical and grotesque gem, produced squarely under the auspices of the studio system. And credit matinee idol Tyrone Power, at the height of his popularity, for having the wrecking-ball-sized cojones to portray not only a complete bastard but a complete bastard who winds up an honest-to-God circus geek—biting the heads off chickens in a sideshow! Power plays a carny hustler who learns the phony spiritualist racket from brassy Joan Blondell. In no time, he's raking in cash by preying on the misery of grief-stricken rubes—until a gruesome comeuppance leaves him washing the taste of rooster guts out of his mouth with a fifth of Old Overcoat. You'll feel like doing the same after a sampling of director Edmund Goulding's corrosive cynicism, which scalds victims and victimizers alike. Not even a redemptive ending can sugarcoat this bitter pill.

THE CONCORDE—AIRPORT '79 (1979). Stewardess Sylvia Kristel to pilot George Kennedy: "You pilots are such men." Kennedy to Kristel, chortling: "They don't call it a cockpit for nothin'!" What could be worse than dying in a fiery plane crash? Watching this megaton bomb as the in-flight movie while the plane plummets to earth. Disaster movies don't get any sillier (or funnier) than this gut-busting cinematic heap of lost luggage, which has the Concorde under peril from bad guys in cahoots with "brilliant scientist" Robert Wagner. By 1979, the term "all-star" had been graciously expanded to include any B-list talk-show guest who would sub for Foster Brooks at a moment's notice—so the movie's galaxy of stars consists of the likes of John Davidson, Jimmie "J.J." Walker, Susan Blakely, Eddie Albert, Charo, and Mercedes McCambridge (here playing a Russian gymnastics coach, and looking even more butch than she did in TOUCH OF EVIL). How best to illustrate how ramshackle the disaster genre had become? The romantic leads in the original Airport were Burt Lancaster and Jacqueline Bisset; here there's a hot fireside sex scene between Ingmar Bergman regular Bibi Andersson and—ulp!—George Kennedy! Watch Kennedy lean out the window of the supersonic Concorde in flight to fire a gun. Suggested party game: Chug a 40-ounce of King Cobra and try to make it through the opening credits' roll-call of shame without an oxygen mask.

SQUIRM (1976). The CITIZEN KANE of killer-worm movies. A downed electrical line activates millions of ugly Georgia sandworms, which rear their insatiable little mouths and start chowing down on the locals. The director, Jeff Lieberman (BLUE SUNSHINE), wrings every possible variation on the premise, from worms oozing from a shower head to a disgusting gag involving a plate of spaghetti. After this promising career start, the lead, Don Scardino, sadly ended up directing 'A Few Good Men' on Broadway. The most unsettling sequence: a disfigured worm victim sneers at Scardino, "Now *you're* the worm face." A perfect double feature with THE WORM EATERS—or THE LINGUINI INCIDENT.

ROLLER BLADE (1986). In which director Donald G. Jackson (THE DEMON LOVER) makes Jim Wynorski at his rock-bottom crappiest look like Robert Bresson. In the future, which looks suspiciously like an industrial park after corporate layoffs, roller-skating nuns use the power of the "healing blade" to battle the forces of darkness. If you're expecting daredevil stuntwork, prepare for all the slam-bang excitement of "Neil Sedaka Night" at a geriatric roller rink, with action-packed skate scenes that wouldn't trouble the sternest crossing guard. (The main suspense comes from the continuous threat of cast members skinning their knees.) Worth a look for anyone who considered the Linda Blair vehicle ROLLER BOOGIE too gritty a slice of realism.

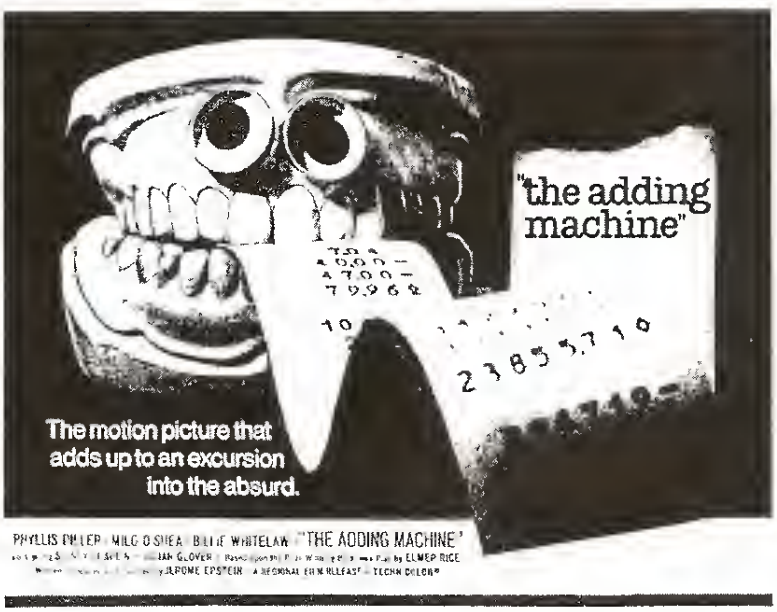
COCKFIGHTER [a.k.a. Born to Kill] (1974). Mickey Rourke wishes he were Warren Oates in this crackpot classic, a brooding, unremittingly grim character study that left mash-crazed rustics scratching their heads when it limped through rural drive-ins in the mid-1970s.

Oates plays an obsessed trainer of fighting cocks in backwoods Georgia who has taken a vow of silence, refusing to speak until he captures the crown of champion cockfighter at an underground national tournament. Thanks to seriously underrated director Monte Hellman, who guided Oates through courageously twisted performances in TWO-LANE BLACKTOP and THE SHOOTING, you can practically smell the sweat and the bloodlust, and the sun-parched Southern locations—small-town arenas spattered with blood and dirt, no-tell motel rooms stinking of hip flasks and cheap tobacco—are as desolate and despairing a glimpse of the American underbelly as anything in TWO-LANE BLACKTOP. Based on a novel by Charles Willetord, the top-notch pulp novelist who wrote *Miami Blues* and *The Burnt Orange Heresy*. Share it with someone you love.

TRISTER KEANE; New York, NY

SEVEN SERVANTS (1996). This German-lensed surreal-fest hasn't found a US distributor yet, and from the sound of it, I doubt it ever will (unless some debacle-savvy video-bootlegger digs up a print). This is the second feature trom Iranian-born director-artist Daryush Shokof, who moved to the US while in his teens, and has high aspirations with this pic, which (in his words) shows that "one is incomplete until one becomes part of everyone else's body and mind." That's all well and good, but this movie is also a lobster field-day; full of crackpot, arthouse pretensions and poor old Anthony Ouinn in the middle of it all. Quinn plays a mega-rich old tart named Archie, who feels incomplete, so he hires on a quartet of multi-ethnic, male servants to stick their fingers into his nostrils and ears, day and night, in his quest for inner peace...Hey, whatever you say, Daryush.. Meanwhile, the very confused-looking David Warner and Alexandra Stewart (MICKEY ONE) play, respectively, Archie's best friend and true love, as Ouinn roams around with his gaggle of young men in tow, stutting his orifices. After awhile, Ouinn and his entourage become "one," with the servants speaking in their master's voice, their hearts beating in time, their strength increasing (which comes in handy when stopping some pesky burglars), and finally achieving the type of serenity that'll have most viewers rolling on the floor from its blissfully-idiotic overdose of pseudo-mystical hooey.

THE ADDING MACHINE (1969). Throughout the early '70s, this film constantly popped up on late night TV, only to disappear from sight for the last two decades. I can't say it's a *good* movie, but it certainly was a *strange* one—and any pic that sticks with you for a quarter-ot-a-decade must have done something right. Based on Elmer Rice's 1923 play, this is the sobering tale ot everyman Mr. Zero (Milo O'Shea), who has frittered away his life with a shrewish wife (Phyllis Diller, sans make-up, in a straight performance) and a boring bookkeeping job. The capper comes on the 25th anniversary of his job, when he's unceremoniously fired and replaced by an adding machine. Zero then murders his boss, is tried and executed, but instead of burning in Hell, winds up in Heaven, accompanied by an office assistant (Billie Whitelaw), who secretly loves him. Don't expect any happy endings though, because in a grim twist, Zero's guilt makes him unable to accept his happiness, and he instead chooses to be reborn into yet another drab, miserable life. A lot of this is clunky and heavy-handed, but Rice's dialogue shines through, while Zero's dead-end existence is similar to the working-class drudgery in BRAZIL. Let's not ignore some excellent supporting work from Sydney Chaplin as a heavenly official, Julian Glover as a timid li'l guy who's committed matricide (only to wind up in Heaven and discover Mom isn't there, after all), and look closely for future MONTY PYTHON femme Carol Cleveland in a supporting role.



DEEP SLEEP (1973). I never had the chance to see this early X-rated flick when it played in theatres (since I was just a kid), but I keep hoping it'll someday pop up on video. I've always admired director Alfred Sole's low-budget horror pic ALICE, SWEET, ALICE, while TANYA'S ISLAND (starring the frequently nude, now-Born Again D.D Winters a.k.a. Vanity) was *far* from the usual sexploitation crapola. The fact that Sole's first project was a porno film, makes me curious if he was able to put his own unique spin on the often-hoary genre. The film stars Willard Butts and Mary Canary, with a plot that's basically a series of comic vignettes and sights gags, with Butts trying to regain his depleted manhood with the guidance of a guru. Sounds dopey, all right, but if Sole puts his usual cinematic imagination into this pic, this might well be a lost treasure (particularly in comparison to the usual mutton-flogging slop that passes itself off as erotic entertainment nowadays).

THE GOSPEL ROAD (1973). God help us all, it's a feature-length, musical about the life of Christ, co-written and co-produced by Johnny Cash! Yes, back in the early '70s, Cash sunk half-a-million bucks into this half-baked "expression of faith," and then lugged it around the South, touting it as "our life's proudest work." In California, he even set up a special concert/screening combo at Knotts' Berry Farm (which always had idiotic bookings—who else would hire Barry "Greg Brady" Williams for a solo singing gig?). Lensed in Israel, we get June Carter Cash (badly) playing Mary Magdalene, while director Robert Elfstrom (who earlier worked with Cash on JOHNNY CASH! THE MAN, HIS WORLD, HIS MUSIC, and was also the cinematographer on DePalma's HI MOM!) also stars as Jesus F. Christ himself—with his son, Robert Jr. playing the rugrat savior. Johnny solemnly narrates the thing, while the life of Christ is interspersed with documentary footage of Cash wandering around historical rubble. The one (slightly) redeeming factor is that Cash sings many of the pic's tunes, along with musical contributions from Kris Kristofferson and John Denver. There's even a smidgen of hilarious 'modern-day relevance,' such as setting Jesus' crucifixion against a burnt-out, urban backdrop. This fundamentalist foolishness might reek, but if you're a Cash fanatic, it's a*lmost* worth the pain.

ICE (1970). With so much mindless dreck released on video, it's about time somebody dredged up this ideologically leftist teature from director Robert Kramer (a filmmaker long overdue for rediscovery). Released on the heels of his critical success with THE EDGE (in which a bunch of burnt-out radicals deal with the prospect that one of their friends plans to assassinate the president), this too is more than just a simple political tract. Most important, it's an examination into the strengths and weaknesses of its rebellious characters, as well as a microcosm of then-current unrest—set nominally within a science fiction framework. Sometime in the near fu-

ture, a US revolutionary organization is at work, trying to pull the American government out of their recent military action into Mexico (an obvious parallel for Vietnam), even if it means assassinating a diplomat, setting fire to an industrial complex, stealing files, or taking over a middle-class apartment building (in order to forcibly educate its residents about their goals). And when one of the radicals brings his wanted, gun-shot girlfriend back to his wealthy parents' house, his folks are less than thrilled with the idea. Long (132 minutes), difficult, and committed to its themes, this somber portrait of urban guerrillas is a far cry from your usual, puddle-deep, late-'60s protest pics. Instead of just going after flashy, surface chaos, Kramer embraces his characters' causes, even as he gives them all very human (and often flawed) faces. Financed by the AFI, shot in appropriately-grainy B&W around NYC, and acted by unknowns, this is a misplaced masterwork.

GREG WALTERS; Tucson, AZ

A VOYAGE TO ARCTURUS (1971). This serious amateur sci-fi film has a group of space travelers going to a planet orbiting the double star of Arcturus. There, they find aliens with telepathic powers, giant dragons, and best of all, fruit that makes people hallucinate. Do it all director, B.J. Holloway, also co-wrote the screenplay, photographed, and edited the film.

ARCANA (1971). A mother possesses the power of ESP, and practices witchcraft to keep her son to herself both mentally and physically. This rarely seen film by Giulio Questi is probably just as crazed as his DEATH LAID AN EGG and SE SEI VIVO SPARA. Starring Lucia Bose (THE FEMALE BUTCHER) and Tina Aumont (TORSO).

QUEM E BETA (1973). A post-apocalypse story, Brazilian style, made eight years before THE ROAD WARRIOR. In a storyline that became familiar, normal people battle mutants for control of what's left of the world. Nelson Pereira Dos Santos, the director, was the founder of the Brazilian New Wave of filmmakers in the '60s, a group that also included Ray Guerra and Glauber Rocha.

LES SOLEILS DE L'ILE DE PAQUES (1971). Six people are lured to Easter Island by star-like aliens, to see if Earth is ready for contact with them. In the end, the aliens decide that they are not. A French-Brazilian-Chilean co-production with Norma Bengall (PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES) and atore-mentioned Guerra. Claude Lelouch is credited as a production collaborator. The title translates as THE SUNS OF EASTER ISLAND.

A FABLE (1971). Race relations from a black perspective. Whites and blacks fight a race war in a future America. Based on a play called SLAVE. Al Freeman, who directs and stars, was in THIS REBEL BREED as a gang leader. Is this the ultimate blaxploitation film??

LE GRAND DÉPART (1972). Here's an unusual French film, shot entirely in negative. A man in a cat mask has a number of strange experiences that include raping a woman, molesting little kids, and at the end, racing with the world on a raft!! Sterling Hayden stars.

DAS GOLDER LIEBE (1983). Eckhart Schmidt is an unknown commodity in this country, apart from TRANCE. It has the most morbid atmosphere of any horror movie I've ever seen, except for maybe REVENGE OF THE DEAD, by Pupi Avati. Here's another blood and guts horror film, with the usual creepy mood and ritual murders. Alexandra Curtis, the lesser known daughter of Tony, is the heroine.

KATARSIS (1963). It's too bad that this Italian production was either never completed, or had a very limited release, because Christopher Lee plays two roles. He plays Mephistopheles, and the man who sells his soul to the devil, in another variation on FAUST. According to the actor, the producer died during production, and he thought it had never been released.

WHAT A FLASH (1972). One hundred convicts, both male and female, are sent into space to relieve overcrowding in prisons on Earth. The only catch; they only have three days to live. The mass orgy at the end is the main reason to watch this arty softcore French sci-fi film, directed by Jean-Michel Barjol.

MILES WODD; London, England

STRANGE HOLIDAY (1945). Strange film. One Friday the 13th, businessman Claude Rains returns from a two week vacation in the woods to find everything has mysteriously changed, his wife (Gloria Holden) and children gone and no one willing to explain what has happened, until he's arrested and undergoes inquisition from sinister Martin Kosleck. Ultra low-budget wartime propaganda from Arch Oboler which spells out its message of not taking freedom for granted in no uncertain terms might have filled out a TWILIGHT ZONE slot but it requires a couple of montages, including an opening 3 minutes of extraneous war footage, and endless scenes of a catatonic Rains sitting in his cell reminiscing about his family just to get it past the hour mark. Unsettling violence and the strong cast make for a distinct curiosity.

YOU'RE A BIG BOY NOW (1967). Peter Kastner, who comes across as a slightly more restrained Jerry Lewis, plays Bernard a virginal library assistant who moves into his own NY room, fends off his frustrated landlady (Julie Harris), passes on "sure thing" Karen Black and gets involved with a neurotic avant-garde theatre actress (Elizabeth Hartman). Directed by Francis Ford Coppola, the film is a potpourri of the sort of stuff you'd expect from a talented, aspiring director of the time, aided greatly by some impressive camera work courtesy of Andrew Laszlo. We get a porno loop burning up (a great comic scene as Kastner get his tie caught in the spool), clips from among others Corman's PIT AND THE PENDULUM and Coppola's earlier DEMENTIA 13 incorporated via nightclub scenes and a trip to the movies, and lots of walks down 42nd Street (at one point a passer-by seems to recognize Kastner and goes running after him!), all to the accompaniment of some groovy songs from The Lovin' Spoonful and with a supporting cast that includes Geraldine Page, Rip Torn and a young Tony Bill.

A JOLLY BAD FELLOW (1964). A year after JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS Don Chaffey helmed this obscure, darkly comic tale (co-scripted by Robert Hamer) of a famed university professor (Leo McKern) who by chance discovers an undetectable toxic and proceeds to poison those who stand in his way including the sexy gold-digging assistant (Janet Munro) with whom he has been having an affair. Reteaming McKern and Munro from that greatest of all British sci-fi flicks, THE DAY THE EARTH CAUGHT FIRE, the film boasts a terrific supporting cast including Miles Malleson (the bumbling purchaser of "views" in PEEPING TOM), HORROR HOTEL's sinister Patricia Jessel, and Dennis Price whose presence can't fail to invoke the better known KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS, plus a cool John Barry score, though on the downside the film's ironic ending is bit predictable. Known in the States as THEY ALL DIED LAUGHING, which you won't, but worth seeing.

RING OF FIRE (1961). Two years before becoming America's most famous fugitive, David Janssen played an Oregon deputy sheriff who is kidnapped by three teenage delinquents, and finds himself facing such dangers as psychotic killer Frank Gorshin and a raging forest fire plus accusations of statutory rape from jive-talking jail-bait Skidoo (Joyce Taylor). Although the last 30 minutes of cultish-director Andrew Stone's first color film drifts towards conventional action fare, the super sexy, stacked Taylor is always on hand to keep proceedings at an appropriately tawdry level.

THE NIGHT HOLDS TERROR (1955). The opening spoken credits have all the hyperbole of a Corman trailer as they introduce the villainous triumvirate of "Vince Edwards, John Cassavetes and David Cross as the three vicious criminals" who hold-up a businessman, terrorize his family, and wait for a large ransom payout in director Andrew Stone's fact-based suspenser. The film bears obvious plot similarities to the same year's THE DESPERATE HOURS, but thanks to Cassavetes, convincing-as-ever as an edgy merciless killer, Edwards' sleazy misogynist creep, and Stone's nervy direction, this comes across more as precursor for Russ Meyer's black-and-white mid-period thrillers. Unfortunately, the latter stages feature too much overly exacting footage of police procedure and phone tracing which somewhat disrupts the film's high intensity nightmare scenario.

THE WRONG MAN (1993). One time underground film-maker Jim McBride almost hit the big time a decade ago, but aside from THE BIG EASY, both his choice of subject (his terrific Killer biopic GREAT BALLS OF FIRE) and treatment (his pop-art remake of Godard's BREATHLESS) proved too outre for mass American tastes, and the stature of his work has been on a steady decline. THE WRONG MAN is hardly likely to set him back on the upward track either. After jumping ship in Mexico, American sailor Kevin Anderson (already wanted for murder in his homeland) finds himself on the run from local police after circumstantial evidence pins him as the prime suspect of the killing of a smuggler who has lifted his wallet. He hooks up with a barely together John Lithgow (giving one of his typically outrageous performances, downing bourbon for breakfast and mouthing expletives I'd be amiss to repeat) and his floozy of a wife (Rosanna Arquette at her most sluttish, and constantly out of her dress) who Anderson is soon humping as her husband sleeps off his hangover in the next room. McBride sacrifices narrative logic and suspense for characterization and local color resulting in an almost Wellsian flavor that, as far as south of the border thrillers go, isn't quite in the ALFREDO GARCIA league, but definitely warrants a look.

OPERATION PINK SQUAD 2 (1989). While most Hong Kong comedies-of-horror tend to leave me both stone faced and decidedly unchilled, this wacked-out concoction is an exception. Director Jeff Lau recently made the panned Chow Yun-Fat vehicle TREASURE HUNT, but don't let it put you off OPS2—nominally a sequel, but in reality out there (way out there!) on its own. The plot has the pink squad babes disguised as whores in an attempt to track down some forged bank notes, only the place they hole up in happens to be haunted by a beautiful ghost (Luo Nan-Kuang). The film rejoices gleefully in its low-concept humor and excrescent excesses: One of the squad's hubbies believes his wife is really turning tricks and stakes out their nest; a decapitated head is chased down corridors by a swarm of remote-control helicopters, and there's a hard decision to be made as to who must be castrated in order to enable the squad's escape from the vengeful spirit. Ouch! Wild!

HENRY COVERT; Charlotte, NC.

OTTO MUEHL: SHORT FILMS (VSoM; 1964-70). Where would the legion of Helms-oppressed performance artists playing in food, meat and bodily fluids be without the transgressive work of supreme subversive Otto Muehl? Muehl and his crazed co-conspirators Kurt Kren, Otmar Bauer, etc explore the outermost perimeters of human expression in this collection of extreme art films capturing their "materialaktion" madness. "O Tannenbaum" features quick-cut images of a Christmas tree mounted on a nude body (Otto's performers rarely being clothed), butts sticking out of suitcases, eggs, ink, and loads of sundry goop smeared and sprayed on naked bodies and washed off, all beautifully lensed through a lime-green filter. "Mama und Papa" is filmed in grimier yellow-green hues with the *de riguer* gooey scenes ever more masterfully shot, with hypnotically rhythmic cutting that puts Brakhage and Anger to shame. Highlights include a flower painted between a woman's buttocks and a man in a black suit humping a naked woman with a balloon between them (it pops). The brainjarring editing abstracts the scatological images 'til they become a tactile landscape. The stark B&W "Ana" is cut at hyperspeed, like Jackson Pollack crashing headlong into Brion Gysin by way of Shinya Tsukamoto. "Wehrertuchtign" is a red-tinted daisy chain of dudes smattered with edibles, and the epic "Sodoma" features floggings, enema action, hardcore sex, and communal hedonism that plays like Manson family outtakes filmed by Makavajev. A penis juts thru an open book, a butt creeps through a door, and Otto gets peed on. With each film, Muehl's avant-garde sensibilities threaten to succumb altogether to pedestrian porn and Waters-esque shock value (which certainly has its place). The nadir is either "O Sensibility", with a grisly duck sacrifice (I was afraid they might fuck the fowl!); or "Schiesskerl (Shit-Ass)", Otto's most notorious dip into depravity, dealing with everyone's favorite taboo, coprophagia. Not only does his lead "actress" shit on poor Otto, but he eats it, too. After the initial shock, the piece degenerates into a bad German porno loop with various of his troupe trying in vain to arouse Muehl (Don't blame him...this film made MY dick shrivel). The long-buried treasures on this tape hold up equally well as primal psychodrama or a litmus test for pretentious death rock poseurs and GG Allin-worshipping putzes who need to be force-fed a few reels of materialaktionen without the safety net of a few brews. Herr Otto was indeed a sick, sick boy, but he was also some kind of hellborn genius.

BLACK HEAT (Xenon; 1976). The late, great Al Adamson was a master of repackaging his sublime dreck with hopes that eventually some clueless schmuck would mistake it for cinema. To be fair, SATAN'S SADISTS is an all-time favorite in the biker film sweepstakes. Al even employs its two stars, the imperishable Russ Tamblyn and the underappreciated "Freak-Out Girl", Regina Carroll (Mrs. Adamson), to no avail, in this flick, which he also passed off as THE MURDER GANG, GIRLS HOTEL, and, for all I know, THE INCREDIBLE MR. LIMPET. The convoluted plot concerns Guido (J.C. Wells, one of the only actors here with a lick of charisma—which is why he gets about 10 minutes screen time, I guess), a mobster who recruits two depraved club owners with the mental acuity of rancid meat to help hook up an arms-for-drugs deal. Tamblyn sleepwalks through his psycho role as Ziggy, one of the two scumbags. The good guys here are a cop named "Kicks" (Timothy Brown of NASHVILLE) and his girlfriend (BLACK SHAMPOO's Tanya Boyd) who monitor the deal and close in on Guido (at least Al kills off Kicks' dorky white sidekick). A tacky gang-rape scene almost grinds the already lumbering picture to a lurching halt. Gary Graver lenses with a modicum of competence, but the slapdash feel of this thing works against its dubious merits (an acid jazzoid soundtrack; glimpses of Boyd and Carroll) causing it to fail to be the side-splitting affair of Adamson's "best", much less prime blaxploitation.

BABA YAGA (Luminous; 1973). Director Corrado Farina puts a mod spin on Guido Crepax's sado-masochistic comic Valentina, cooling down the kink of the strip while playing up its Eurochic milieu, in this gaudy pop-culture artifact. Valentina (Isabel deFunes) is a hip photographer who attracts the veiled, black-clad witch Baba Yaga (Carroll Baker) who enchants Val's camera and gives her an S&M doll in spiked leather named Annet. The doll comes to life and steals Val's camera, leading her to Baker's castle for some Crepax-styled whippings. All this to the chagrin of Val's sometime lover Arno (spaghetti western vet George Eastman), a pretentious filmmaker who Val berates for selling out by squandering his "talent" on cheesy TV commercials (check out the racist detergent ad). And don't forget Val's "erotic" dreams replete with Nazi interrogations, hippies with end-of-the-world signs, and good ol' witchie and her devil doll. These sequences come the closest to approximating the delirious furor of the source material. Though it occasionally threatens to sag beneath boho pretensions in attempting to wring some political subtext out of its script, this flick is sublime eye candy, lensed with ravishing style and teeming with opulent sets, funky fashion, and gorgeous music, that deserves a cult of its own.

THE LOVE MERCHANT (SWV; 1966). Soap-styled sexploitation from that purveyor of thinking mans' trash Joe Sarno. Millionaire Kendall Harvey III hires Click, a backwoods biker, to procure young female flesh to sate his incurable "loneliness". Click's sometime girlfriend Bobbi, a boho painter on Greenwich Village, has a "square" friend Peg, that Harvey takes a shine to. When Peg's husband Roger runs into cash trouble, Kendall agrees to bail him out if Peg spends two days and nights with the satyric tycoon. Sarno gets way more mileage out of the premise than Adrian Lyne's putrid update, INDECENT PROPOSAL, as Peg is ceremonially disrobed and offered up to Harvey at a swinging orgy replete with pounding bongos. After the done deed, Peg spills all to Rog, who splits for parts unknown. The intrigue thickens as Click scouts up Dixie, a white trash belle, dressed head-to-toe in black leather and shades like some lost Velvet Underground member, and does a Pygmalion number on her. Harvey's Girl Friday Polly flogs Click with his own bike chain for groping her (she's more interested in Dixie). Peg gives Ken another spin, but Click sabotages everything by worming Dixie into Harvey's bed, sending Mr. Lonely headlong towards a confrontation with the aforementioned bike chain, courtesy of Polly. Judson Todd as Harvey steals the show with a prototype for all the hedonistic soap opera zillionaires that followed (where's this guy now?). With ripe dialogue ("*She's* exquisite. *You're* exquisite. I *buy* exquisite things."); arrhythmic go-go dancers; and delightfully smarmy characters, this is one to watch at your next swingers party.

THE VELVET VAMPIRE (1971). The early 70s yielded some impressive variants on the "Countess Dracula" theme (i.e. LEMORA, VAMPYRES), including this dippy treat from Corman's New World stable. Director Stephanie Rothman (TERMINAL ISLAND) provides a welcome female spin on the Corman trash flick formula. Celeste Yarnall stars as a desert-dwelling, dune-buggy-riding bloodsucker immune to sunlight as long as she wears her groovy white cloak. She takes turns seducing a thoroughly SoCal couple, played by doe-eyed Sherry Miles and ever-cool Michael "Lance Rock" Blodgett from BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE DOLLS, who keeps things moving with his affable beachbum swagger. Loaded with in-jokes (Yarnall's character is "Diane LeFanu"); psychedelic slo-mo love scenes; and the perfunctory fanging here and there, it's not exactly DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS, but not a bad way to kill 82 minutes.

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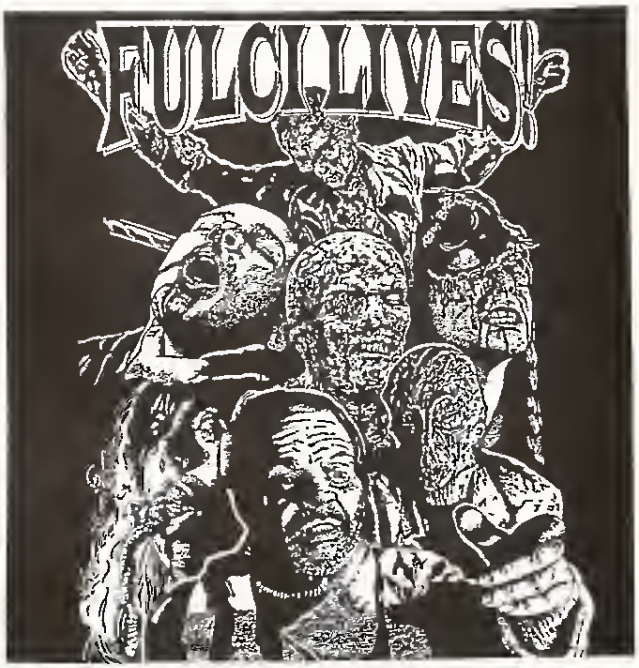

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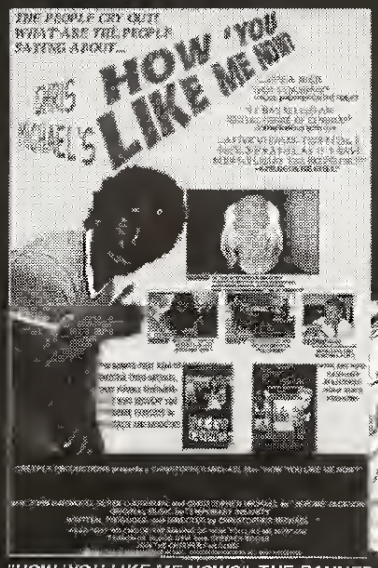

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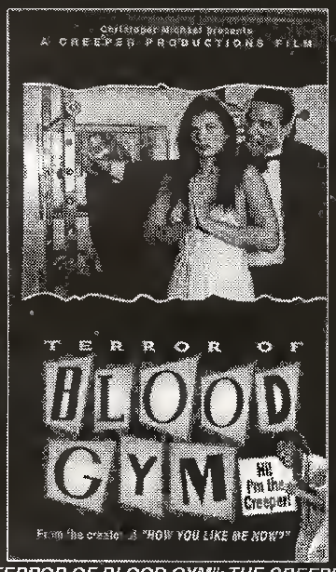

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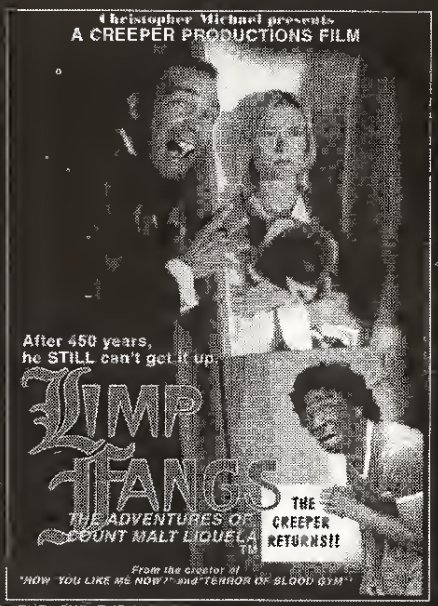

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FILM REVIEWS

THE PHYNX (VSoM; 1970).

This infamous rock 'n' roll spy satire is such a blissfully unreleasable misfire that I couldn't take my eyes off of it. Hilarious (for all the most unintentional reasons), it's crammed to the sprocket holes with cameo appearances from Hollywood's most decrepit stars, and plenty of limp Cold War schtick. Kicking off with asinine animated credits, it strives for the wackiness of The Monkees, but only inflicts the type of abdominal pain that comes from watching too much of The Jerry Lewis Labor Day Telethon. A Warner Brothers' pick-up, I wonder who dosed their water cooler the day this celluloid turd came up for a vote.

When Communist Albania snatches several of America's most-unemployed entertainers, including George Jessel, Butterfly McQueen, and Colonel Sanders, the SSA (Super Secret Agency) gets involved. Their undercover agents are decked out as bikers, hookers, Black Panthers, and armed Boy Scouts, while their leader wears a cardboard box over his head but sounds exactly like Tricky Dick Nixon (courtesy of Rich Little). Consulting their super-hokey super-computer MOTHA (Mechanical Oracle That Helps Americans, which is shaped like a woman, complete with cone-shaped breasts that'd put an eye out), it calculates that their best bet is to infiltrate Albania via a rock group. Now, all they have to do is create a new, chart-topping sensation—which they do with a quartet of "volunteers", including a black actor, an Indian, a jock, and a college dweeb.

Calling themselves Phynx (oh, *now* the title makes sense) and dressing like a living shrine to Sonny Bono, Clint Walker heads up their military training, Richard Pryor turns up in a cook's outfit to "teach you soul," and Dick Clark gives their mod perms a thumb's up. Next stop, The Ed Sullivan Show, where they wow the crowd with "What is Your Sign?"; and then it's onto Europe, where the spy shit kicks in—making their way into Albania with the aid of groovy glasses that allow them to see through women's clothes, locate secret maps traced on their bellies, and finally use the power of rock 'n 'roll to break down barriers. Literally.

Additional cameos include James Brown awarding them a gold record, plus blink-or-you'll-miss-'em appearances from Rona Barrett, Ultra Violet, Trini Lopez, Martha Raye, Joan Blondell, Johnny Weismuller, Joe Louis, Leo Gorcey, Huntz Hall, Rudy Vallee, Edger Bergen, and Pat O'Brien (who quips that if fate had been kinder, Ronald Reagan would've been here instead of him). Mind you, this is only a partial list, and there are more fossils in this pic than in the Museum of Natural History.

Despite all its (very obvious) failings, how can you dislike a movie with dialogue like: "The US government is pleased to announce...*an orgy!*" as a roomful of cheerleaders and Playboy bunnies attack our pre-fab rock sensation? The hideous fashions include anglo afros, the crappy music was by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, and director Lee H. Katzin went onto direct episodes of SPACE 1999 and the pilot for THE MAN FROM ATLANTIS. 'Nuff said.

THE COOL ONES (VSoM; 1967).

The moment maverick studios like AIP started making a buck with their rockin' drive-in pics, the big boys (in this case, Warner Brothers) jumped on the bandwagon, face first, with this type of uncool result. Director Gene Nelson (responsible for mid-'60s Elvis pics like HARUM SCARUM) and producer William Conrad (TV's CANNON) are clueless, and this teen flick makes Frankie & Annette's beach fare look like David Mamet. Under its trendy facade, this is your typically sappy, rise-to-fame romantic melodrama, but luckily, it's sprinkled with enough music industry goofiness to make it a tad less vomitable than you might initially think.

Gil Peterson stars as Cliff Donner, a washed-up-at-24 rock star, who's now slinging tunes at a two-bit Palm Springs nightclub. Bubbly Debbie Watson (best remembered for playing Marilyn Munster in MUNSTER GO HOME) is Hayley, one of the show's dancers, who bursts out of her go-go cage on live TV, "flips her wig," and becomes a cult sensation with her accidental dance craze, The Tantrum.

Though Roddy McDowall gets top billing, he doesn't pop up until half an hour in, just in time to save this pic as a Phil Spector-like rock genius, Tony Crumb. With wraparound shades and an entourage to match, this guy is a petulant Svengali, who has eye-rolling spasms when he needs to speak to his analyst, strips down to his purple lamé undershorts in public, and is constantly badgered by amateur bands who're lying in wait for him—bursting into song when he enters an elevator, or opens his closet. It's his job to turn Hayley and Cliff into a singing duet, with a teeth-clenching tune entitled "Have a Tantrum" at the Whiskey-a-Go-Go. Inexplicably, these white-breads become superstars and their romance is threatened (oh no!).

The musical numbers have the cast breaking into song in the most inconvenient locales, such as a mountainside tram, while the best sequences involve WHIZ BAM, a HULLABALOO knock-off chock full of ultra-tacky fashions and groovy dance numbers. And thank goodness for McDowall, because whenever he enters, we realize this is *supposed* to be a comedy. He even warbles his own crappy tune ("I confess, I was stupid. / It's not cool to ever fool around with Cupid.").

As "guest specialties" we have The Leaves, The Bantams, T.J. and the Fourmations, and Glen Campbell singing a rock version of "One of Those Things." Best of all, the amazing Mrs. Miller plays a wardrobe lady who belts out "It's Magic." Still, most of this movie is pure slop, with forgettable leads and a sappy story that grinds to a halt whenever Cliff and Hayley lunge into a love song. Before long, this'll have you longing for the musical competency of GREASE 2.

REVOLUTION (1968).

Peace, love and all those groovy, mind-altering drugs are the topics at hand in this San Francisco freak-out documentary. It's a crude but heartfelt time capsule, released in the summer of '68, just before the Haight Asbury scene turned into one big, unwashed bummer. And even if director

Jack O'Connell (THE GREENWICH VILLAGE STORY, SWEDISH FLY GIRLS) may not have made a great movie, he was at the right time, at the right place, and (most important) with the right tripped-out attitude.

Much of the movie is random footage of the hippie phenomenon, while a cute, blond, 20-year-old runaway named "Today Malone" provides a (slight) framework to this ragged mess. And a bigger bunch of long-haired, wide-eyed freaks I've never seen---crammed shoulder-to-shoulder, celebrating the summer solstice in the Golden Gate Park. God, the stench of patchouli must've been nauseating! Bands blast away, hippie chicks spin in circles, the lightshow begins, and it's the same old acid haze we've come to know and love. Along the way, some interesting tidbits sneak in, including firsthand tales of getting busted, posted notes to runaway children, Ms. Malone unsuccessfully begging passers-by for spare change, a middle-aged nun describing how she's similar to these "hippie girls," and a typical hairball asked if he worries about chromosome damage from too much acid (when it's, obviously, already too late).

Of course, what movie about drugs is complete without a few suited "experts" (including San Francisco's Director of Public Health and the thick-necked Chief of Police) warning about the evils of this new generation's chemical dependence. But in the long run, this is a refreshingly pro-drug, pro-hippie pic that pushes the joys of LSD when Today doses on camera, and flies off on its mind-altering effects (actually, all they do is sit around a room, rolling their eyes and feeling a peach).

The filmmakers have all the bases covered. They document the oddest niches of Hippiedom, which appeals to the curious. There are plenty of groovy visuals, in case you're dosed. They even toss in some nude performance art to suck in the T&A crowd. It also features ragamuffin fashion at its worst (not as ratty as today's Squatter Chic look, but close), plus music by Country Joe and The Fish, Quicksilver Messenger Service, and The Steve Miller Band.

Nowadays, this nonsense is impossible to watch without laughing at these naive, burnt-out rebels, and it's a reality check for folks who think the hippie subculture was exactly like PSYCH-OUT or THE TRIP. Unfortunately, real life was a lot less charismatic than reel life. And whenever one these wide-eyed innocents vows they'll never conform to The System, I'll give you odds that nowadays, they're somewhere in suburbia, selling Amway products and falling asleep to AMERICA'S FUNNIEST HOME VIDEOS.

A MAN CALLED DAGGER (1967).

With a career that spans the glory days of the drive-in (PSYCH-OUT), arthouse cult hits (THE STUNTMAN) and overdue rent checks (FREEBIE AND THE BEAN), how could anyone *not* appreciate director Richard Rush? But before all of these other pics, he cranked out DAGGER—another in a long line of then-fashionable spy spoofs. Since the script sucked, Rush was lucky to have camera-whiz "Leslie" (Laszlo) Kovacs on board, as well as an oddball cast. Far from a lost treasure, it has its more bizarre moments, and as the trailer informs us, "You'll dig Dagger."

After the usual groovy credit sequence, we meet Paul Mantee (ROBINSON CRUSOE ON MARS) as Richard "Dick" Dagger—a super-secret agent, as well as a master of disguise. (An eye patch? Sure, that'll work.) The fact that he makes George Lazenby look three-dimensional doesn't seem to be an issue. His latest gig is to put an end to yet another plot for world domination, spearheaded by a wheelchaired, Nazi Colonel played by...*Jan Murray?*

Yes, nightclub schmuck Jan Murray co-stars as Rudy Koffman (a.k.a. SS Obergruppenführer Hans Leitel), an S.S. bastard who sits in his high-tech chair (equipped with a flame thrower, no less) and plans to brainwash powerful military leaders and industrialists, thanks to radio receivers implanted in their teeth. His motto: "Nice Guys Always Lose" (done as a needlepoint in his opulent super-villain office).

Armed with typically kitschy gadgets (such as a laser beam watch, and knock-out gas matches), Dagger seduces several women, avoids various assassin-beauties, and finally infiltrates Murray's meat packing plant HQ (by simply walking in with a 40 lb. slab of beef on his shoulder). And like any episode of BATMAN, when Dagger is captured, Murray and his ex-Nazi scientists spell out their entire secret plan to this prisoner. Smart, eh? It's no wonder they lost the war.

The supporting cast is a blast, including Terry Moore (ex-Mrs. Howard Hughes), Sue Ann Langdon as Murray's stripper gal toy (complete with a Zsa Zsa accent), Bruno VeSota and Leonard Stone as Murray's Nazi cronies, and Richard Kiel as Otto, one of Koffman's henchmen. And if you think the sight of Mantee winning a hand-to-hand brawl with the juggernaut-like Kiel is funny, just wait until the finale, which has Murray dying on a meathook! Yeah! For those of us who grew up on Murray's debatable comic talents, this is an image to cherish! In the larger scheme of things, this pic looks slick, finds the right attitude, but doesn't have a brain in its head. So dopey it makes the Matt Helm series look like Tom Clancy, but to be fair, those Helm pics probably spent more on Dean Martin's bar tab than Rush did on this entire production.

RUN HOME, SLOW (J4HI; 1965).

This is one of the creepiest, nuttiest westerns ever made. It's no wonder the damned thing was barely released. Lensed on (an obvious) spare-change budget, director Tim Sullivan gets high marks for this subversion of the genre, complete with a music score composed by Frank Zappa and a sicko camaraderie amongst the cast. Best of all, it stars Oscar-winner Mercedes McCambridge, just before her career *really* hit the skids with Jess Franco fare like 99 WOMEN and DEADLY SANCTUARY.

Sullivan wastes no time in layering on the sleaze, beginning with a bunch of cowboys lynching some vicious old fart named Jud Hagen. Unfortunately, it turns out that Hagen's three kids are even worse and still on the loose—robbing, killing and acting like half-retarded (and that's being generous) psychopaths. There's Ritt, the leader; Kirby, a slow-witted hunchback; Ritt's ditzy blonde wife, Julianne (who's also his cousin); and McCambridge as dyke tomboy Nell (Mercedes acting *butch?* I don't believe it!)

Their primary plan is to take revenge on the locals who hung their Pa. But they're all so fucking stupid that they lose their horses, forget their guns, and end up walking across the desert without any water, trying to make it to Mexico, ahead of the posse.

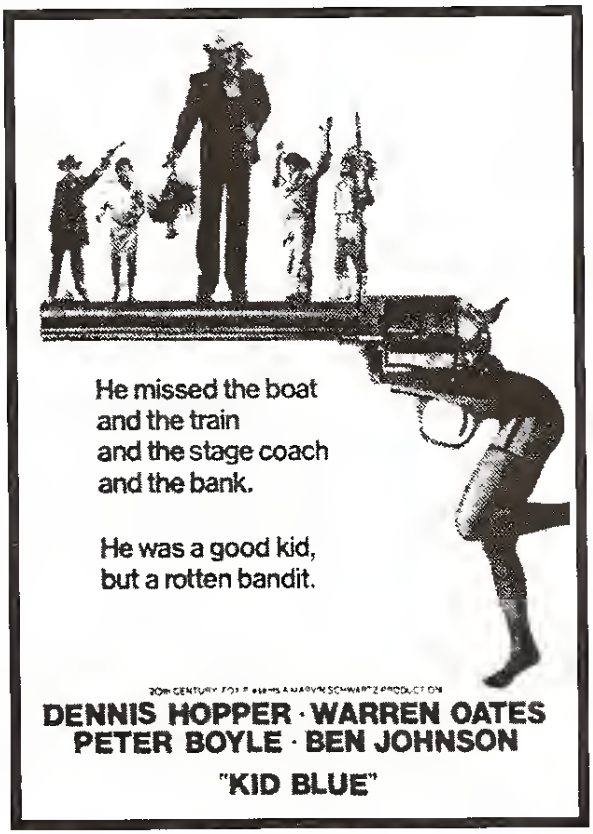
For the rest of the flick, we simply follow this bizarre quintet, as they verbally abuse each other (Mercedes insults Julianne's hair with, "Looks like a whole mess of long yellow worms crawlin' right outta her skull."), Ritt is shot, Julianne whines, and they all prove to be vile, unredeemable slobs. Coming across an abandoned farm, the family sets up house, with Julianne dancing about in a newfound dress; Kirby pawing at a half-burnt Bible, even though he can't read; and manipulating bitch Nell trying to run the show the moment she thinks Ritt is dying.

This is uncompromising, compellingly demented trash that shuffles about on its own unfathomable rhythms. Not a whole lot happens in the 78 minutes—but it's the *way* in which it transpires which gives the movie such a creepy, "what the fuck am I watching?" tone. Co-starring Linda Gaye Scott, Allan Richards, Gary Kent, and Bud Cardos (double-teaming it as both a supporting actor and production manager).

KID BLUE (1973).

Nowadays, it seems like anyone with a quarter-baked idea and some coked-out marquee value can parley that into a feature-length movie. This situation isn't new, of course, as this counterculture, Old West freak-out proves. It's a pre-MUPPET MOVIE oddity from director James Frawley, starring a lovably pre-detox Dennis Hopper and a cool supporting cast in equally harebrained roles. And though not yet available on video, I was fortunate to catch it at Manhattan's Film Forum—the only local theatre with the balls to dredge up this sort of long-forgotten dementia (on the other hand, it's too bad their projectionist, Blind Bob, couldn't focus a Scope 16mm print).

A scraggly-haired, overalled Hopper plays Bickford Waner (a.k.a. Kid Blue), a train robber who gets sick of his inept exploits and tries to go straight in the "big city." Arriving in the piss-ant town of Dime Box, Texas, he begins his legit career by emptying spittoons and sweeping up M. Emmet Walsh's barbershop, then quickly moves up the job market, to wringing chickens' necks. Along the way, Bickford runs into Warren Oates and Lee Purcell (DIRTY LITTLE BILLY) as a married couple, Ralph Waite as a boarding house resident, and Howard Hesseman as a shop keeper. And though he wants to be a good citizen, it's difficult when sheriff Ben Johnson is constantly calling him "white trash." But he finally snags a job shoveling the huge kiln at the town's (symbolic) factory, the Great American Ceramic Novelty Company, which makes the type of kitschy ashtrays you'd find on the boardwalk at Atlantic City. In the end, Bickford is lured back to his old, criminal ways.



The most obvious problem is that Hopper doesn't cut it as a naive "kid," since he was 37 at the time, and looks every day of it. Still, you can't beat some of the comic images, such as a naked Oates and Hopper squeezed into a tiny bathtub together, with the flirty Purcell scrubbing their backs. In particular, Warren is a howl, as a fey hubbie who babbles far too much about The Greeks and the joys of male friendship. There's also Peter Boyle as a hell 'n' brimstone preacher who's building an "aerocycle" (an embellished bicycle with wings) in the middle of the desert, while praising God's gifts of peyote, hemp and alcohol. Plus Janice Rule turns up as an old actress-whore pal of Hopper's.

Complete with a big chase finale, and outlandish Indians who make F-TROOP's Hekawi tribe look like Native American icons, this pic is a four-star mess. Still, if you're attracted to the cast it's worth a look, since they're the only reason this wrongheaded mix of comedy, crime and dipsy dramatics works at all. When it comes to the sub-genre of Pothead Westerns, this is at the top of a *very* short list.

CHRISTIAN YOUTH SCARE FILMS: Vol. 1 and 2 (SWV; 1959-1960).

Something Weird Video is always dredging up some fabulous dreck from the past. In this instance, it's black-and-white religious mini-dramas, courtesy of "Family Films" (whose logo is a cross merged with the symbol of an atom!), with "Christ-centered motion pictures that focus directly on the problems young people are facing today." The pics are introduced by some crew-cutted, degenerate reverend, while the kids in these pics are so clean-cut that they make Richie Cunningham look like G.G.Allin. Sticking your dick in a light socket is more subtle than this rubbish, and that's exactly what makes them worth a look. So grab a cold beer, get that crack pipe blazing, and prepare to laugh your ass off, as a bunch of idiot teens are convinced to waste their lives on Bible bombast.

In TEENAGE CONFLICT, a Science Club clashes with a brother and sister's religious beliefs, but when a famous scientist comes to a Club meeting, they learn that he too has embraced Christ (at the expense of his free will, of course). This is one of many directed by Harold Schuster who, earlier on, was a big-screen hack with pics like MY FRIEND FLICKA. And look for Hayden Rorke (I DREAM OF JEANNIE's Dr. Bellows) as their dad.

TEENAGE WITNESS has Terry, a Christian whiz-kid abused by school atheists (including future LOST IN SPACE alum, Mark Goddard), and although nearly suckered into teaching Goddard how to pick locks, Terry's godly influence has Goddard's Rebel Without a Christ learning the error of his ways. TEENAGE CHRISTMAS has a pack of teens working on a Nativity scene for Xmas, and when two little heathen rugrats wreck their display, the Christian Kids track 'em down. But instead of beating the piss out of them, they're forgiven for being pint-sized white-trash.

Others include TEENAGE LOYALTY (a high school do-gooder skips her Christian responsibilities because of a school play). TEENAGE CODE (a 'square' agrees to paint a mural at a gang clubhouse), A TEENAGER'S CHOICE (a teen couple plans to run off and get married, until a Christian pal douses their idea), and THE RIGHT START (a juvenile delinquent joins a baseball team and robs his teammates).

Whoaaa! That's plenty! And this double dose of Christian dogmanure will have sinners writhing on the floor (with alcohol-induced laughter, that is), thanks to its interchangeable '50s sitcom reality. The stories are essentially all the same—someone has a crisis in faith, they finally turn to God, and there's a sledgehammer moral at the end. You know, I'd hate to think that there are kids who still believe this sanctimonious propaganda. Thank goodness I had enough whiskey in the house to keep myself happily anesthetized throughout this holy hokum.

LAST FRANKENSTEIN [Rasuto Furankenshutain] (VSoM; 1972).

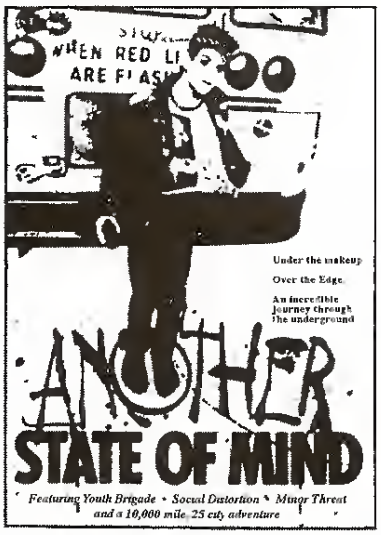
I doubt that you'll find a more brain-fried movie in this entire issue. Or a more compelling one, for that matter. Just imagine if a young Cronenberg was hired to make a Frankenstein movie for Toho, and this would be the result. Directed and written by Takeshi Kawamura, it's cold, compelling, and laced with lovable absurdities.

Told as an extended flashback, a professor explains the events leading up to a worldwide cataclysm. First off, the suicide rate has tripled, in large part due to a cult known as The Religion of Death, whose goal in life is to "praise God and kill ourselves." Running about in white face paint, screaming "Death! Death! Suicide is God!", they've even got high school kids offing themselves *en masse* in the middle of a sunny city park.

Sarusawa, our professor, also has a teenage daughter named Mai, with telekinetic powers (such as floating in mid-air in the middle of a classroom). When scientists suspect that suicide is actually a *disease* that can be spread, Sarusawa begins worrying about his own future, since his wife killed herself five years ago. Heading into the wilderness, he tries to track down his only hope, the one-eyed Professor Aleo (a.k.a. Frankenstein), who was tossed out of the scientific community for his attempts to create a new breed of emotionless human. Unfortunately, the misanthropic Aleo is *glad* the human race is coming to an end. What else would you expect from a guy who considers his collection of abnormal fetuses his "best friends"?

Living in the middle of nowhere, with only a hunchback (who runs about town, collecting naked corpses in his Volkswagen Bug), his crippled wife, plus a home-made male and female, ready for resurrection, all this wacko needs is the right psychic power source to bring them to life. Enter Mai, and the rest is history. But all of this is only a build-up for the *really* screwy portions, including various unnatural relationships, unearthed secrets, and even home movies of this bizarre extended family frolicking at the beach! Wow!

Somehow, this works on a number of different levels—it's totally out of control, full of heady ideas concerning the evolution of society, and even has a few touching moments. Of course, this mindfuck will also send any normal moviegoer fleeing, especially when their li'l family begins to rip apart at the seams. Even more impressive than its hardcore Weirdness Factor is the elegance of the filmmaking. One look at its gorgeously composed imagery, and you realize that Kawamura, as well as his film, are true originals.



ANOTHER STATE OF MIND (Time Bomb Filmworks; 1984).

There are plenty of cool punk documentaries out there, but this hardcore, no-budget pic doesn't get mentioned nearly enough. Instead of focusing on some hot, spiky-headed *punk du jour*, it follows a pair of young L.A. bands—Youth Brigade and Social Distortion—on a ramshackle tour across North America in the summer of '92. On one side, it's a nostalgic trip back to a pre-'alternative' age of bad dye-jobs and slamming the shit out of each other in the pit. It's also a surprisingly deft and well-edited work, with much of the credit going to stalwart directors Adam Small and Peter Stuart, who went along for the ride.

Hoping to prove that punks aren't "mindless morons," the boys (the oldest musician is 21) buy an old school bus and plan on hitting 30 cities in only 5 weeks, starting in San Francisco, and moving through Seattle, Canada, and onto NYC. It sure looks good at first, as they play shitty little dives (which are probably Starbucks nowadays), and drop in on friendly crash pads, complete with scary chili and a skateboard ramp.

Their optimism doesn't last long though, especially when the bus breaks down, they're dicked around by fat old club owners, the money runs out, and they tire of their close quarters. Soon pissed-off band members begin ditching this Tour From Hell and Greyhounding it back home ("If you're hungry, nobody's unified."), as the remnants *push* their bus into Washington D.C.

In addition to the band interviews (mostly Distortion's Mike Ness and Brigade's Shawn Stern—who won't shut up), this is packed with choice moments. Meet Marcel, a messed-up punk in a wheelchair, and a buzz-cut Montreal punkette who brags about "beating up faggots" for fast cash. See 'em run into Minor Threat while in D.C., with future Fugazi frontman Ian MacKaye working his day job, at a Häagen Daz. Plus, there are laughs aplenty when they stay at NYC's "P.U.N.X. House"—a Christian youth hostel which forces these *very* confused kids to sing church gospels. This is great footage!

Despite all their problems, Youth Brigade saw this as a punk victory, while the abandoned Ness planned to put together a new version of Social Distortion (and unlike most musicians, who simply shoot their mouth off, he actually went out and did it). Shot on 16mm and video, it's loaded with raw and often unintelligible music (hence the occasional subtitles), and is a fast-paced, invaluable portrait of a lost era. On an additional note, footage from the movie was cannibalized in the RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT television show, as an example of bizarre cultural behavior.

THIEVES AFTER DARK [Les Voleurs De La Nuit] (1984).

Brilliant, eccentric and altogether fearless, director Sam Fuller was considered 'Alternative' before most of today's indie icons were even born. This craggy old genius has been cranking out his own distinct brand cinema since the late 40's—from his early war pics, westerns and pulp fiction (culminating with his kickass SHOCK CORRIDOR/THE NAKED KISS combo), to his later, barely released (at least in the US, that is) yarns. Unfortunately, this French-lensed romance-noir is far from top-flight Fuller.

Based on the novel *Le Chant des Enfants Morts* by Olivier Beer, Veronique Jannot and US character actor Bobby DiCicco star as Isabelle & Francois, a young pair who meet on the unemployment line, when Isabelle gets pissed off and hurls a chair through a window. These two Paris misfits end up having coffee, talking a bit, then jumping right into bed. He wants to play violin for the philharmonic, she wants to curate a museum, and soon they're in love, obsessed and broke. So, of course, they turn to crime! And their first move is to terrorize the employment bureau agents who've been treating them like trash (with the daughter of one even helping them out, by gladly opening her pop's safe).

Sure, a quirky Euro-mix of GUN CRAZY and BETTY BLUE sounds terrific, except that this self-anointed "Bonnie and Clyde" are (1) too principled, and (2) neither sexy or appealing. Rebellious? Sorta. Bland? Absolutely! They even get nervous when their crime spree/revenge goes a little too far. At least things get more hardboiled once they're on the run from the police—skipping Paris and heading for the snowy border, for an appropriately desolate capper.

In the supporting cast, we get Claude Chabrol as an unemployment clerk who also likes to play voyeur on his female neighbor by hanging off his balcony. Stephane Audran is Isabelle's mom, working at a fish market. And Sam himself even pops up in a tiny role, as a wealthy, eye-patched tence. Behind the camera, Fuller does his best to beef up the material with his usual flashes of subversion, while the photography by Philippe Rousselot (DIVA) offers up more style than the characters deserve. Worth a look for Fuller addicts, as long as you don't have your hopes up.

THE DAY OF THE BEAST [El Dia De La Bestia] (1995).

The much-anticipated sophomore effort from director Alex de la Iglesia runs on the same energy that fueled his mutant-aged ACCION MUTANTE. Though it involves the impending birth of the Anti-Christ, this ain't no OMEN. It's a comedy as black as they come, with enough supernatural hokum and grisly thrills to make most US genre releases look like the cinematic equivalent of Miracle Whip. Besides, when a film has a priest crushed to death by a giant, falling cross in its first minutes, how can you *not* enjoy it?

Alex Angulo stars as Father Angel, a priest who has spent his life studying the Apocalypse and has determined that The Beast will be born on Christmas Day (tomorrow, that is) in Madrid, thus triggering the end of the world. His plan is to commit every type of sin and crime, in order to become closer to Satan, learn the Anti-Christ's birthplace, and save the world. This leads to some of the funniest moments, as this innocent-looking little priest pilfers a beggar's change, whispers "I hope you rot in hell" to a dying man, and even abuses a mime (OK, maybe that one's *not* a sin, after all).

During his misadventures, he meets an oversized heavy metalhead, Jose Maria (Santiago Segura), and takes a room at his mom's boarding house; with residents that include Jose Maria's senile grandfather, who stumbles 'round the house naked and takes LSD at the breakfast table. Together, Angel and Jose Maria recruit a black-leathered TV psychic named Professor Cavan (Armando De Razza). Invading his apartment and forcing him along on their seemingly-mad scheme, Cavan changes his mind after they perform an invocation, using holy water, virgin's blood (secured without permission from the sexy, but chaste, housekeeper), white bread, and a pocketful of hallucinogens. Hey, if I took *that* much acid, I'd be seeing an upright Goat Creature in my living room too!

All of this gets increasingly frantic, with our pious priest beating people senseless, and everyone in the cast winding up bloody, battered, or hanging off the side of a skyscraper. There's loads of horrific imagery (such as a bum burnt alive by a pack of vandals), and the leads are all wonderful.

The tone of the movie is also important, with Madrid shown as a city already halfway to hell, and where violence and Satan worship seem like an everyday occurrence. The Xmas backdrop is also the perfect touch, especially during one frantic chase, when a Nativity-scene Wise Man gets shotgunned! This is *my* type of Christmas movie! Like ACCION, the storyline fragments long before the end, relying instead on fudgy FX; but considering this was lensed on a fraction of ACCION's budget, Iglesia does a smashing job---coming up with a dark and original vision that lays waste to anything in its path.

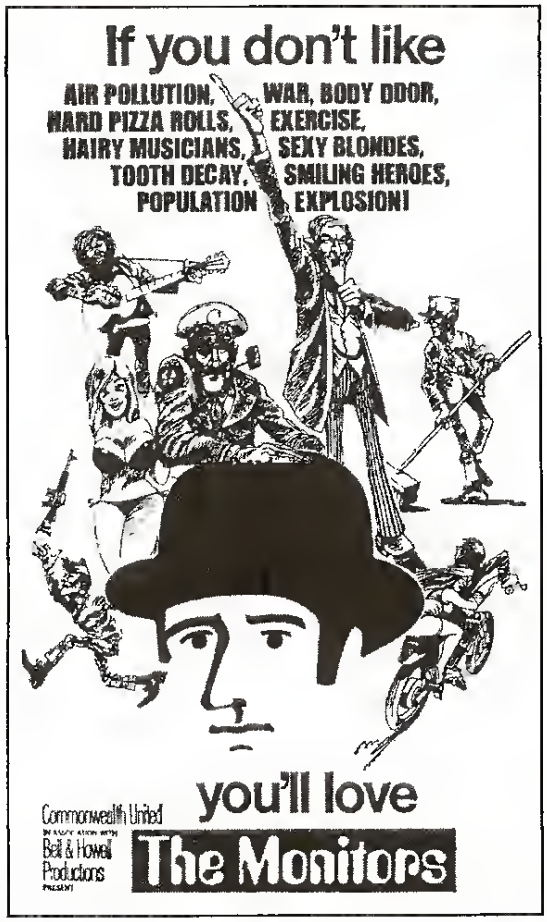
THE MONITORS (1969).

This Chicago-lensed sci-fi/comedy doesn't have a clue, yet there's still something strangely compelling about it. Based (barely) on a novel by Keith Laumer, this obviously wants to be a cult treat (imagine THE PRESIDENT'S ANALYST crossed with THE PRISONER), but director Jack Shea is in *way* over its head. Lacking any true wit or intelligence, he simply loads the cast with shitty comedians, and crosses his fingers.

We learn at the outset that mankind has been taken over by a bunch of derby-wearing, black-garbed aliens who call themselves The Monitors. Oddly, most of the population accepts their presence, since they've made the planet a nicer place to live—even though it means trading away their free will. And whenever some human gets out of line, they're taken in for "counseling."

Guy Stockwell (long before bloating up in SANTA SANGRE) stars as heroic test pilot Harry Jordan, Susan Oliver (THE LOVE-INS) is a sexy actress who's working for the seemingly-benevolent invaders, and both wind up on the run from the Monitors for disobedience. Undermining this sci-fi scenario, we also have Larry (F TROOP) Storch as a hardcore member of an alien-hating underground organization, Avery Schreiber as Stockwell's brother, Keenan Wynn as the war-monger general (how many times have we seen that tired cliche?), and Ed Begley Sr. as the president, with his desk symbolically covered in cobwebs.

All of the comedy falls flat. All of the themes are heavyhanded. Still, it has a distinctively chilly coating, thanks to the inventive cinematography by "William" (Vilmos) Zsigmond. This crams everything into the stew—from cheap psychedelia and cut-rate action, to indulgent use of split-screen and lame comics who overplay every chance they get. And wait until you see Storch in drag, complete with a Dolly Parton-style wig! Then add cameos by Jackie Vernon, Xavier Kugat and Alan Arkin—all hawking The Monitors on TV commercials sprinkled throughout. Yet beneath it all, this is your typical sci-fi conceit, with emotionless (but well-intentioned) invaders bringing peace and prosperity. *But at what price?*..In this case, the price is an earnest, albeit wrongheaded pic, which falls on its face early on and decides to stay there.



PETS [a.k.a. Submission] (J4HI; 1973).

This chunk of '70s sleaze is the epitome of drive-in dreck. More important, it was also the debut of Candice Rialson, a sexy blonde who later top-billed such crap-classics as HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD and CHATTERBOX, and became the short-lived queen of exploitation. Leave it to director Raphael Nussbaum (who produced Al Adamson's THE FEMALE BUNCH) to put her through the wringer with this tawdry delight.

Rialson stars as Bonnie, a buxom young lass who runs away from her asshole brother (in a skimpy halter-top and mini-skirt, of course) and goes from one bad situation to another. First, she becomes an unsuspecting participant in a kidnapping, when a black woman she's just met suddenly pulls a gun on a lecherous slob, gets his cash, and takes him hostage. Of course, Bonnie is so horny that she ends up raping their captive (who, understandably doesn't protest the situation). After that, she links up with a lesbian artist (Joan Blackman), who lets her take a bubble bath and makes Bonnie her new, often-unrobed model. Ever the ditz, Bonnie fucks up that sweet situation by screwing a greasy burglar.

Things take a demented turn at midpoint, with the introduction of a filthy rich, terminally-odd art collector named Vincent Stackman, played by Ed Bishop (best known to sci-fi geeks for playing Ed Straker on UFO, but in this pic, sporting dirty brown hair). When this closet psycho gets an eyeful of a topless canvas featuring Bonnie, he becomes obsessed and wants to make her a new pet in his basement menagerie—alongside raccoons, tigers, et cetera. Bishop is great as this far-from-subtle, misogynist's wet dream, who takes a bullwhip to Bonnie, in order to tame her like any other wild animal.

Rialson is instantly comfortable in front of the camera, and this is a four-star showcase of her most apparent talents. She dances seductively, shakes her bare breasts into the lens, poses in bikinis and lingerie, and essentially, plays a big tease in a tiny wardrobe. It's a must-see for Rialson junkies (unfortunately, she never went onto much big studio work, outside of a small role in Eastwood's THE EIGER SANCTION). It's also laced with wonderfully sick laughs (such as when an annoying pet dog is blithely tossed off a cliff ..THUD!) and hilarious anti-female rhetoric (A woman's place? "Possession, by a man.") Meanwhile, the plot bounces all over the place (as does the ever-braless Rialson). Chock full of fleshy fun, this is also one of the odder sexploitation pics from that era.

THE WITCHES [La Streghe] (1969).

Artsy European anthologies were all the rage during '60s, including BOCCACCIO '70 and SPIRITS OF THE DEAD. This five-parter is a lesser entry in that sub-genre, and though made in 1965, it didn't play NYC until '69, when it appeared on the bottom of a 42nd Street double bill with Bergman's SHAME! The tiny, text-only ad read "Clint Eastwood in THE WITCHES." Yes, a young, pre-stardom Clint appears in one of the segments, and he's the best reason to check it out—that is, unless you enjoy watching arthouse heavy hitters doing throwaway work.

It kicks off with Luchino Visconti's "The Witch Burned Alive," with Silvana Mangano (who stars in all of them) as a beautiful actress who visits a Swiss hotel and teases all of the drooling men, only to have her layers peeled away. It's saccharine and overlong. In Mauro Bolognini's shorter, no better "Civic Spirit," wounded Alberto Sordi is whisked to the hospital by a seemingly helpful Mangano, only to wind up on a joyride. Pier Paolo Pasolini does a good job with "The Earth Seen From the Moon," as an oddball father/son team go on a toolhardy search for a new wife/mother. They hit on a grieving widow, a whore, even a mannequin—before marrying a deaf and dumb beauty. Filled with surreal moments (while cleaning their hovel, a buried midget is found under a pile of dirty laundry), this offers up broad, colorful silliness.. Franco Rossi's "The Sicilian Belle" is little more that a snippet about a jilted woman and the chaos that results.

The best is saved for last, in Vittorio DeSica's "An Evening Like The Others," which stars Eastwood as a boring husband who ignores his wife's requests for excitement since he's "a modern man, not a caveman." Instead, his missus (Mangano) indulges in her own memories and fantasies, from simply smashing a plate over his head, to their earliest days together, with Clint swan-diving into bed, wearing nothing but bikini briefs. He also gets knocked out by a make-believe muscleman (complete with pre-BATMAN style, visual sound effects ..SOCK! PAFF!), and there are even cameos by The Phantom and Mandrake the Magician! When Mangano performs a striptease before a stadium full of cheering men, Eastwood commits suicide!

All of this silliness is gorgeously lensed by Giuseppe Rotunno, along with high camp costumes and pure white sets during many of the dreams. But what you'll primarily remember from this pic is Eastwood, playing a bespectacled dullard (think Dick Van Dyke) who whines about his annoying life, plucks his nose hairs, and namedrops A FISTFUL OF DOLLARS while perusing a newspaper. Far and away, the most entertaining episode of the lot; and if you want to know the real meaning of 'terror,' just wait until you see Clint *dance*! I *still* feel a bit queasy ..

ENTERTAINMENT STATION [Mahattet El-Ons] (1975?).

I'll never forget this unapologetically-stupid, Egyptian musical-comedy. Because the last time I experienced such pain was when I ate a plateful of bad clams at Coney Island. Only a truly special motion picture can do that type of damage to one's digestive tract, and after 115 minutes, I began to wonder if

this was actually an insidious Middle Eastern plan to shrivel our will to survive.

Much of the movie is set in the middle of the desert, along a nearly empty strip of roadway, at a gas station poking out of the sand like a blackhead. Their only problem? They have no gas to sell. So while owner Ramadan (badly) plays his accordion and dreams of selling his pile of (horrible) songs, his oafish worker Fuad keeps the place open by scattering nails over the road and fixing their flats. Are you laughing yet? If you are, it's only at the thought that I wasted two hours of my life on this crap, instead of *you*.

It's not as if the convoluted plot really matters, but here it is, for the record. A wealthy slob named Tolba is hot (and I would be too, under all those layers of fat) for a local dancer, Miss Sahar, who dreams of stardom and begins sucking up to movie mega-star Wahid Yusri (who looks like any NYC cabbie, except for his Tony Orlando perm). After awhile, everyone converges at Ramadan's place, and 'wackiness ensues.'

First, Yusri blows out all four tires, which gives Ramadan a chance to get the guy piss-drunk, and then show off his 850 accordion tunes. And when Ramadan isn't being henpecked by his sister, Sahar poses as his wife, in response to her brother and uncle's anger that she's disgraced them by becoming a dancer. Best of all, a biker gang suddenly rolls into the station, announces they're staying the night, and breaks into a song 'n' dance number about how the land belongs to everyone. Of course, all of the plot strands take a saccharine turn by the end, with everyone falling in love and devoting themselves to God. Wow! What a load!

The musical numbers are excruciating, and register just a notch above a Kathy Lee Gifford Xmas special. As for the acting? My guess is that the cast learned from watching bootleg imports of HEE HAW. Directed by Hassan Ibrahim and starring Lebleba, Said Saleh and Samir Ghanem (according to my source, all quite famous in their homeland), this make BIO-DOME look like it was written by Noam Chomsky.

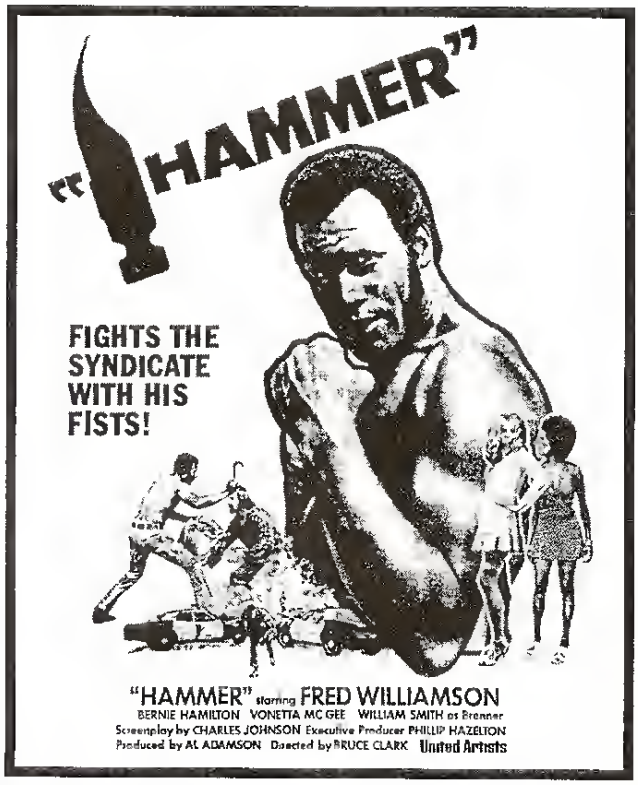
BLONDE ON A BUM TRIP (SWV; 1968).

When it comes to NYC's drug culture of the late '60s, forget Andy Warhol's somnambulistic counter-culture claptrap, because this ultra-groovy B&W time capsule is the *real* thing. It's 65 minutes of grindhouse bliss from director Ralph Mauro, with sound sync'ed worse than an old Godzilla pic.

Opening with the groovy tune "Put the Clock Back on the Wall" by The E-Types and negative-montage credits, we first see our title 'Blonde', a college girl named Susan, freaking out and being taken straight to the local psycho ward. In addition, a cop wants info on a female friend of hers, who was chopped up during a Lower East Side orgy, and begins interrogating the mind-blown partygoers. From then on, we get the sad story of Susan, a square student turned bad, after her two thrill-seeking roommates (who, of course, lounge around in skimpy lingerie) convince this chemistry brainiac to manufacture her own LSD.

The fragmented flashbacks to the events leading to her mental meltdown include a party full of "strange looking people" (according to straight-laced Susan)---the type of shindig where all the ladies end up losing their clothes (don't you hate it when that happens?). Then the trio of gals hit NYC for the weekend, "ready to swing" and equipped with a bottle of liquid, lab-made acid. Thanks to a party tray of laced sugar cubes, Susan turns on for the first time (under peer pressure, of course), complete with funhouse mirror hallucinations.

Carol Trent is put through the emotional wringer in the lead, and the rest of the cast looks the part, while I wouldn't be surprised if they were as high as their characters. Best of all, there's loads of authentic local color, with all the bad hair, heavy eye-liner, leggy chicks, and acid rock tunes you could possibly stomach. In addition, let's not ignore the gratuitous toplessness, for the maggot-flogging Times Square crowd. And though the storyline is nominally anti-drug, the filmmakers wisely allow the thrill of them to sneak through. Sure, it's silly, but even if this doesn't capture the era as it *really* was, it gives us a far-out glimpse into the way we can only *wish* it had been.



HAMMER (1972).

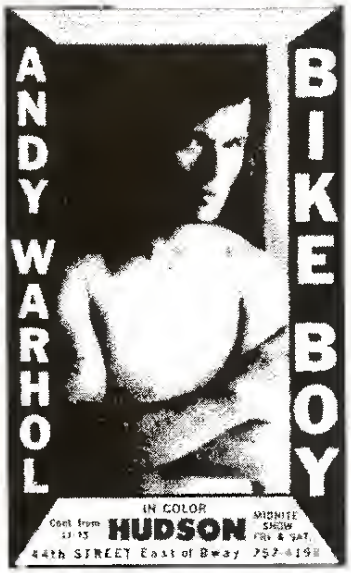
Fred Williamson is riding a small wave nowadays, thanks to his showstopping turn in FROM DUSK TILL DAWN and the solid grindhouse throwback, ORIGINAL GANGSTAS. But it's not as if the guy has ever really disappeared—he's been starring-in/directing his own line of Po'Boy Productions for the last two decades. Not bad for a guy who started out playing Dianne Carroll's lawyer beau, Steve Bruce, in the sitcom JULIA.

This Mob pic gave Fred one of his earliest leading roles, and helped introduce his persona (not to mention, his nickname) to the world of action cinema. Never one to stretch his acting ability, this pic is no exception, with Fred playing a small-time boxer named B.J. Hammer, who gets in deep with the local wiseguys. When he's fired from a loading dock job, the often-shirtless Hammer goes back into the ring, but soon finds himself in the middle of heroin dealing, which his agent does on the side. For awhile, Hammer is just in it for himself, but once he realizes that "a scam is coming down" he makes sure that no "jive-time, jelly-belly cat gonna rip me off." Of course, the Mob wants him to take a dive during 'The Big Fight', which prompts the ever-macho Fred to beat the crap out of everyone.

Director Bruce Clark (THE NAKED ANGELS) and screenwriter Charles Johnson (who also scripted such Deuce faves as SLAUGHTER'S BIG RIP-OFF, THAT MAN BOLT and MONKEY HUSTLE) keep the story clean and brisk, while combining boxing, broads and brutality. For producer Al Adamson, this was one of the few truly impressive credits on his resume.

Fred's also surrounded by cool, familiar faces, including Bernie Hamilton (STARSKY AND HUTCH's Sgt. Dobey), D'Urville Martin (who would co-star with Fred in his Tommy Gibbs/BLACK CAESAR duo, and later direct DOLEMITE), Mel Stuart, a very young Leon Isaac (Kennedy), and Vonetta McGee (BLACULA) as Fred's "mama." Best of all, world-class bad-ass William Smith takes a break from his biker movies to play the Mob's chief goon. He's the perfect hardcore shithole, whether he's nonchalantly beating the piss out of supporting slobs, or O.D.ing anyone in his way.

Loaded with seedy locales, astounding fashions and Fred's pork chop sideburns (which could technically be considered a special effect), the plot might be one big cliché, but it's pummeled along by The Wit and Wisdom of Williamson (on women: "Just like a bus... You miss one, you catch another.") Fred's at the top of his form—a virtual superman, kicking Whitey's ass in the name of blind justice—and that's exactly why we love him so.



BIKE BOY (1967).

It's no big news that Andy Warhol helped legitimize the underground film movement of the '60s, with his avalanche of one-take wonders. Released just after the Solanas shooting, this homo-erotic snooze-a-rama is a perfect example of the heights his voyeuristic banality could reach. Hey, at least in this pic, Andy learned how to move his camera, and it almost look like somebody actually edited the damned thing for a change!

You know exactly where you stand in the first moments, as our meaty Bike Boy (Joe Spencer) takes a shower. He soaps, he rinses, he scrubs, he rinses—along with subliminal close-ups—only to soap up again. This continues for *five fuckin' minutes*, and it begins to feel like a gay porno (but without any screwing). Finally, after much staring into the camera, our lead goes about his random business and drags the viewer along. In hindsight, I'd rather stay in the empty shower stall...

We then watch guys in a dressing room, trying on bathing suits, with the camera poised perpetually at crotch level. (Hey, be careful with those close-ups! You'll put someone's eye out!) Our brooding lead then has his inseam measured, and shops for cologne with the help of a couple annoying, faggy clerks. After that, he sits around a flower shop, gabbing with the proprietor about fucking a sheep. Without question, the funniest moments involve his run-in with Ingrid Superstar—who simply won't shut up. She bitches at length, calls him a fag, takes off her top, and goes on and on and on about cooking eggs. Meanwhile, the silent Spencer looks like he's going to pass out from boredom (not unlike the audience). It wraps up (and picks up) with Viva and Joe on a couch, both stripping down and the film stock running out in mid-sentence—just as it gets interesting.

As you can guess, there isn't much plot, and the flick consists of 109-minutes of inane, free-form conversations. Spencer never gets the opportunity to act, but at least looks the part in his leathers, black t-shirt and jeans. And while the film obviously turns him into a queer fetish figure, all the guy does is hit on chicks. On a purely technical level, the spastic edits and sudden, strobe-like flashes of light give the pic a slightly trippy veneer. Though perceived nowadays as some type of gay cultural artifact, it also makes homosexuality look so boring that I'm surprised the entire population of Christopher Street didn't sue at the time, for defamation.

AFTERMATH (Dunwich; 1994).

Filmmaker Nacho Cerdà is one sick bastard. And if his personal life is anything like his movies, I'd stay far away from ever dropping by his place for a visit. Meanwhile, this Spanish, 31-minute pic makes no concessions to good taste, beginning with the sound of screeching tires, a dull thud, and a long, lovely shot of a dog with its guts strewn all over the pavement. Getting a little queasy? This is the time to exit, kids, because that's *nothing* compared to the brain-damaging fun to come.

The remainder of the movie is spent in a morgue, with a fresh body rolled in. There's no real story; just one long, seductively grim autopsy of a human body, all in glorious, close-up Grue-O-Vision. The doctor slices open the skull, pulls out a double handful of brain, digs open the torso (don't forget those rib cutters!) and tears out all of the internal organs. Best of all, when he's done, he simply crams 'em haphazardly back into the chest cavity (including the brain) and sews the dead guy back up. Oh, don't worry, it doesn't end there. Wait until you see what the guy does to a young female who turns up on one of his slabs. I won't give it away, but I will advise you *not* to watch this flick with any woman you *ever* want to speak to again.

This is a calm, cool, stomach-churning gem, that's both convincingly graphic and steeped in an authentically disturbing attitude. And unlike some amateur piece of blood-soaked trash, these folks are legitimately talented, with the gorgeous photography by Christopher Baffa only making it more difficult to watch. It's also a fabulous glimpse into the humanity of the medical profession—right down to the psycho Doc's emotionless eyes as he goes about his rancid business. This accomplishes everything that Cerdà set out to do; whether your stomach can make it through the movie intact is your own call. Believe it or not, it makes NEKROMANTIK look like THE BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY.

THE PUSHER (1958, released 1960).

This pulpy detective yarn boasts authentic NYC locales and a hardboiled storyline that spins us from the dingy alleyways of Harlem, to a smoky Latin dance hall, to Cleopatra's Needle in Central Park. It's also loaded with big, unintentional, anti-drug laughs, especially if you watch it when you're high. Though not yet released on video, I was lucky enough to catch this nearly-forgotten B-movie when it turned up on TV, on a weekday at 5 a.m. (which is the perfect time slot to show a movie about heroin addicts, because *they're* the primary audience at that hour).

A Puerto Rican teen junkie is found hung in the dingy clubhouse of a local gang named The Green Tigres. Sure, it *looks* like suicide, but two cops—Lt Baron and his partner Steve (Robert Lansing)—think something's fishy. Little do they know, the Lieutenant's innocent blonde daughter, Lori (who's also engaged to Steve), is also mainlining dope, and getting her "jolts" from a suave pusher named Gonzo. This Gonzo is a bastard all right, using innocent-looking shoeshine boys as his nickel-bag runners, and turning good girls to junk by giving them "powders for their nerves" when they get headaches. Soon they'll sell their own mom for a needleful.

Best of all, there are sleazy little details generously sprinkled throughout. For example, the cops happily lock up a bunch of junkies and let them go cold turkey in their cell until they talk. Nice guys, eh? And when the Lieutenant learns his daughter is hooked, he handcuffs her to her bed, nails up her bedroom windows with two-by-fours, and gives her an in-house withdrawal, which has her rolling on the floor, ripping at her clothes, and calling pop a "lousy two-bit copper."

And get a look at the talent behind the camera. It's based on an Ed McBain novel, and scripted by Harold Robbins, long before his best-selling potboilers. The expert photography was provided by Arthur J. Ornitz, who later lensed everything from SERPICO and Cassavetes' MINNIE AND MOSKOWITZ, to Shirley Clarke's THE CONNECTION and Russ Meyer's BLACKSNAKE. Meanwhile, director Gene Milford is best known for his editing skills, which included BABY DOLL, WAIT UNTIL DARK, and winning an Oscar for ON THE WATERFRONT. And yes, that's a young John Astin playing a detective at a murder scene. Complete with a bluesy score, this pic transcends its sledge-hammer melodramatics, thanks to a stench of icy reality.

IN SEARCH OF THE HOLY FORESKIN (1996).

How could I possibly pass up a documentary with a title *this* good? For a moment, I even wondered if it would turn out to be a satire of those chintzy Sunn Classics pics from the '70s. But no, this British, Channel 4 production is dead serious. And in only half-an-hour you'll learn more than you'll ever want to know about the infamous Holy Foreskin of Jesus Christ (or, in Latin, *Preputio*). As one expert explains, "It's old, in bad condition, small... And it's gone missing."

Since Jesus was a Jew, there must've been a foreskin somewhere along the way, and for centuries the earth's only remaining piece of earthbound

Jesus was safely kept in a little church. That is, until in 1983, when the parish priest took it home with him while the church was under renovation, kept it in a shoebox, and it mysteriously vanished. If you wonder why you've never heard much about it, that's because at the turn of the century, the Pope forbade any mention of the thing. A smart move, since the only other times the word "penis" and "Catholic Church" are used in the same sentence is when a sore-assed choir boy rats out some horny priest.

Writer/producer Miles Kington also dwells on other bizarre Catholic relics and takes a pilgrimage bus to Assisi, where thousands pray to an old shirt and a brown, tattered letter. And while always respectful of the Church, the show doesn't skimp on the loopier aspects of their obsession with holy relics. The fact that a chunk of some long-dead saint can hold such spiritual meaning to these folks only proves that they obviously have a bit too much time on their hands. But at the forefront of this whacked documentary is this lost foreskin which could reputedly perform miracles (correct me if I'm wrong, but I think the same has been said about Ron Jeremy's)...Ahh, don't you love religion?

TOKYO FIST (VSoM; 1995).

Director Shinya Tsukamoto is best known for his celluloid mindfuck, TETSUO: THE IRON MAN, while his follow-ups, TETSUO 2: BODY HAMMER and HIRUKO left me a little cold. Never fear, because this certifiable madman (who makes Lynch look warm 'n' fuzzy) is back in prime form, with a kinetic psycho-drama that's, arguably, his best work yet. Chock full of unsettling imagery and out-of-control emotions, this is a simple romantic-triangle which, thanks to Tsukamoto's adrenalized style, becomes a hellish vision of modern society.

Besides directing, Tsukamoto also took on the writing, editing, cinematography, production design, and also gave himself a lead role, as Tsuda, a nebbish insurance agent who's having problems with girlfriend Hizuru (Kahori Fujii). Meanwhile an old-acquaintance-turned-professional-boxer, Kojima (Kohji Tsukamoto), becomes his nemesis, when Hizuru is inexplicably drawn to this "rabid dog with muscles." The moment Tsuda gets jealous and acts like a shithead (in part, due to an old schooldays trauma), one punch from Kojima nearly blasts Tsuda's face clean off of his head, with blood gushing from his nose like Old Faithful.

Driven to learn how to defend himself, Tsuda joins Kojima's boxing gym—only to get even loopier when Hizuru dumps him and moves in with his macho rival. He's not the only one flipping out though, because the usually docile Hiruzu suddenly begins piercing her nipples with red hot ice picks and becomes an overnight Violence Junkie. Between Tsuda's stalking, and Hizuru's increasing weirdness, you almost feel sorry for the relatively-sane Kojima, who only wants to beat people to a bloody pulp in the ring.

This is Tsukamoto's most accomplished film, in every sense—technically, emotionally and psychotically. Plus, he's finally learned just when to pull back from his cinematic hysteria for some eerie moments peace. Along the way, Tsukamoto makes Tokyo seem like one of the creepiest, most sterile cities on the planet; but what you'll remember most about this flick are the dizzying boxing sequences, which feel like you're watching RAGING BULL on bad acid. Even simple "sparing" makes ROCKY look like ROCKY AND BULLWINKLE, as faces are transformed into mounds of raw meat. Full of twisted (but no less valid) emotions and out-of-control bloodshed, this four-star masochism-fest will gnaw at you long afterward.

Z.P.G. [a.k.a. Zero Population Growth] (Paramount; 1972).

Before rocking The Deuce with THE MACK, and turning the story of Jesus on its political ear with THE PASSOVER PLOT, director Michael Campus tossed his talents into this futuristic sci-fi scenario. Imagine SOYLENT GREEN on a Toho budget, with cheap plastic cities and acting to match. At the forefront, there's professional-boozehound Oliver Reed (in the wake of THE DEVILS and WOMEN IN LOVE), who obviously needed a new agent.

Set sometime in the 21st century, the earth is filled beyond capacity and people roam the streets in gas masks, thanks to pollution so thick it looks like one, perpetual Grateful Dead concert. As a remedy, The World Council decries that for the next 30 years, having a baby will be illegal and punishable by death. But don't worry, young couples—at "Babyland" you're given a creepy robotic doll (an embellished Cabbage Patch Kid) as a substitute child.

Reed and Geraldine Chaplin star as a married pair who have to deal with the hardship of not being allowed to raise their own bawling, defecating rugrat. When Chaplin gets pregnant, she refuses to abort, and since everybody wears skin-tight body suits, her condition is difficult to conceal once she begins to swell. Sappiness ensues as Chaplin goes into hiding, and after giving birth, their neighbors (Don Gordon and Diane Cilento) uncover their secret and get possessive towards "*our* baby."

Despite its hokey FX and a purposefully drab veneer, Campus keeps it weirder than you'd expect. In this cold, nasty vision of the future, all the ponds and lakes have been filled in for housing; people have to wait for years to get into museums that display stuffed, extinct species (such as cats and turkeys); and if you try to reference a touchy subject at the library, you're automatically interrogated. Unfortunately, the film falls to pieces once its emotions take precedence over its brain, and the yarn deteriorates into gooier cliches. Blame it on a cheesy script written by a pair of soon-to-be-cheesy authors, Max Ehrlich (THE REINCARNATION OF PETER PROUD) and Frank De Felitta (AUDREY ROSE, THE ENTITY). At least this was an easy paycheck for Reed, who looks constipated throughout and displays all the charisma of a 220 lb. cheese log.

MODESTY BLAISE (VSoM; 19??).

Some productions fall through the cracks; others deserve to be shoved down them, forcibly, for the good of mankind. First off, don't get this mixed up with Joseph Losey's charming, pop-art relic from the '60s. Instead, this US incarnation from director Reza Badiyi and writer Stephen Zito (who later penned such TV-tabloid shit as DIANA: HER TRUE STORY) turn this comic strip super-heroine into an 8th-rate CHARLIE'S ANGEL, in one of the dullest, sphincter-tightening, hour-long TV-pilots I've had the displeasure to endure. It's no surprise that nobody remembers the thing. I'm trying to do the same.

Talent-barren ex-model Ann Turkel stars as Modesty ("It's her name, not her character," quips her Asian-stereotype chauffeur), and there's no way in hell that this walking breadstick could convince us she's an action crimefighter. She looks as dangerous as Karen Carpenter, and in real life, if Turkel merely bumped against a wall, she'd probably break her hip. Meanwhile, for this '80s version, Modesty is relocated to Southern California, with a swanky pad overlooking LA, while her longtime partner Willy Garvin has only slightly less personality than a regular on BAYWATCH NIGHTS.

The idiotic plot has Modesty saving a young girl from professional ruffians, taking her under their wing, and learning she's involved with some nonsense about a stolen defense computer, a kidnapped economist, and an evil Ice Queen villainess who has a boring scheme to bring down the NY Stock Exchange. Meanwhile, Blaise breaks into the booby-trapped estate and ends up caged, while the 'super computer' used to topple the financial market looks like a leftover from Adam West's Batcave.

This might've had a chance if only they had someone more talented than Turkel in almost every scene. Was Lauren Tewes booked up that week? Hell, Isabel Sanford would've been a better choice! Thank God for the Fast Forward button! Of interest only to TV-masochists who revel in bad '80s haircuts and shows that make THE BIONIC WOMAN look like Beckett.

PUFNSTUF (1970).

In the wake of Sid & Marty Krofft's small-screen success with H.R. PUFNSTUF, the genius' at Universal spun it off into this feature-length fodder, in the hopes of introducing their inane characters to a world hungry for ways to keep their children sedated during Kiddie Matinees. It ain't WILLY WONKA, that's for sure. I didn't even like the original series that much, but at least it had a weird-assed, pre-pubescent, drugged-out charm—something this flick totally lacks. Director Hollingsworth Morse (DAUGHTERS OF SATAN) doesn't even have the good sense to retain the original's catchy opening song. And if you think Barney is annoying, just wait until you've met the goody-two-shoes star of this adolescent sinkhole.

At least they kept the same cast, with Jack Wild (a poor man's Davy Jones) as Jimmy and Billie Hayes as Witchiepoo. While padding this out to feature length, we get a 15 minute intro that tells us what the original theme song did in 45 seconds—showing us how Jimmy (and Freddie, his ever-closeted Golden Flute) ended up on Living Island, which looks like little more than an impoverished McDonaldsland.

Following tradition, Witchiepoo is after the magic flute, in order to win Witch of the Year at the annual convention. And for guest star power, we get Martha Raye as Boss Witch and Mama Cass as Witch Hazel, who rips loose in song (complete with a fake nose and a plastic rat on her head). Meanwhile, Witchiepoo plans to make Pufnstuf her "blue plate special," and goes so far as to stick our felt hero on a spit, with a giant apple in his mouth.

I can't imagine many stalwart viewers surviving the slapstick stupidity and abominable songs (which makes THE NEW ZOO REVUE look like Sondheim). On the (very minimal) plus side, it's one of the only kid-movies which features talking mushrooms (nudge nudge). Still, this braincell-killing, saccharine swill is enough to send most children running in terror (with their parents not far behind). Even babyboomers in need of a quick Krofft fix will be quickly bummed out by this drivel.

THE POWER (1968).

Can you believe it? A *good* movie starring George Hamilton! And you can tell the guy truly sacrificed for this role, because he's barely tanned. Of course, this was years before he tossed away any chance for on-screen respect with '70s cinema-poop like THE HAPPY HOOKER GOES TO HOLLYWOOD. Much of the success of this MGM production goes to producer George Pal (in one of his last endeavors), along with his old WAR OF THE WORLDS director, Byron Haskin. Together, they pulled together an imaginative sci-fi yarn which, nowadays, also has its fair share of dated charms, thanks to a familiar-faced cast and its future-kitsch production design.

The time is "tomorrow" and the place is a top secret institute which is experimenting in human pain, thanks to their team of voluntary (well-paid) sadomasochists. Jim Tanner (Hamilton) is a scientist in the group, and all hell breaks loose when it's discovered that one of their team has a super-IQ and telepathic powers. No one is sure who this evolutionary misfit is, but sure enough, soon the members of the committee begin mysteriously dying—starting with Arthur O'Connell, whose eyes pop out of his skull after an extended trip in a G-force accelerator.

As more supporting characters are knocked off, Tanner becomes the prime suspect when all records of his past disappear. Of course, *we* know this is just a part of the mysterious mega-genius' scheme, which has everyone's memory turning into swiss cheese or their hearts crushed with merely a thought. Hitting the road with requisite science-babe Suzanne Pleshette, Tanner searches for a man who everyone knows, but no one can describe; is stranded in the desert, and even get stuck in the middle of a Kitchen Supplies Convention.

Based on a novel by Frank M. Robinson (who co-wrote "The Glass Inferno," which later became THE TOWERING INFERNO), this is pretty hokey stuff, but in the best sense of the word. The supporting cast includes Yvonne DeCarlo as O'Connell's grieving widow, Earl Holliman (POLICE WOMAN) and Nehemiah Persoff as committee members, Aldo Ray as a sinister gas station attendant, and the always welcome Michael Rennie as their Washington liaison. It even indulges in some trippy '60s-style camerawork when Tanner's mind begins to soften—including a funhouse freak-out, street signs talking to him, and an out-of-control carousal. So low-tech that it's quaint by today's standards, this paranoid little tale is so much fun it even makes George Hamilton look like less of a clod than usual. Catch the widescreen version, if possible.

CRAZY THUNDER ROAD [Kuruizaki Sanda Rodo] (VSoM; 1980) and BURST CITY (1982).

Since I'm a huge fan of Sogo Ishii's THE CRAZY FAMILY and ANGEL DUST, I couldn't wait to check out a couple of his earlier, more hellish endeavors. Spitting into the face of then-traditional Japanese cinema, they make a brain-throbbing double bill—but since neither had subtitles, many of the plot subtleties were lost on me. On the other hand, subtlety isn't exactly an issue with either of these action pics.

After viewing CRAZY THUNDER ROAD, it's impossible to imagine how Ishii passed this off as his graduation project at Japan University at Tokyo. It's a raw and often experimental vision of a car 'n' cycle culture gone to seed, beginning with a motorcycle gang ripping down the city streets after dark. These guys have a retro-'50s style, complete with leathers and enough grease in their hair to be the bastard children of Jerry Lewis. And, of course, they have to deal with sudden skirmishes by a particularly sadistic rival gang.

The midpoint highlight is a massive rumble, which only ends when a militaristic looking, Yukio Mishima-clone stops the violence and quickly sucks these delinquents into his ultra-right-wing mindset. Soon, he has created his own makeshift army, complete with German WWI helmets. But when they chop off a guy's hand with a chainsaw, he eventually goes nuts, stumbles across some equally insane rebels, and (with a hook in place of his missing hand, and in a heavily-armored body suit) tackles this mini-militia—aided by a cackling pal with a bazooka.

With its hand-held camerawork and overflowing attitude, this is damned impressive, with plenty of cycle action (albeit on cheap Japanese rice rockets), and a full-scale urban war as a finale. Ishii also finds appropriately bizarre locales for his story, while filming much of it at night and bathing his characters in neon or headlights. Often crude, but well worth a look.

Two years later, Ishii's BURST CITY proved that he was still preoccupied with the biker culture of Japan. But this is a bigger, better mindfuck, which embraces many of the same ideas, but in this instance, allows Ishii to go *totally* nuts. It's almost two full hours of high-octane action and weirdness, and though obviously a no-budget production, this loud, pissed-off, anti-social glimpse into the future flies by like one long hit of nitrous oxide.

A pair of odd-looking individuals (one with a metal mask covering much of his face and head) come to the big, ugly city in their motorbike and sidecar. Meanwhile, all the punked-out, spiky-headed kids are dancing at an Asian version of CBGB's, dressing in their oddest leathers and drag racing. Much of the film is spent on the misadventures of a rock band, living in a factory-style squat. Just playing a simple gig is a challenge for these guys, especially when they're rushed while on stage and beaten up in mid-song. When hassled by the "Battle Police" for speeding, they just beat the piss out of the cops! And when police stormtroopers break up a concert-turned-brawl, the kids toss a pig's severed head at the cops! Yeah!

Let's not forget the subplot with our metal-headed newcomer intruding on the kids' turf, only to be captured and tossed into a prison workcamp detail (along with a bunch of older farts in worn, but traditional, military garb). There's also an exceedingly grim bit about an abused, teenage whore, who ends up dressed in leather straps and duly punished by her freaky pimp. Still, the most terrifying moments involve the guys' bad hair and heavy-mascara, which

gives it all a MAD MAX meets PRISCILLA, QUEEN OF THE DESERT veneer.

What you'll remember most about this pic is its frantic pace and the way everybody beats the bejesus out of each other. There's an explosion of senseless violence or grating music at every turn, and it's all so relentless that it made my head hurt after awhile. Cool! There's hallucinatory camerawork, rapid-fire editing, and the story doesn't stop for a moment, as Ishii grabs his viewers by the balls and drags them along for a joyride into the most deviant aspects of youth culture. Of course, much of the time I didn't know what the fuck was going on, but when a film's this frenzied, who the hell cares?

MELINDA (J4HI; 1972).

This early entry in the blaxploitation sweepstakes was released by MGM on the heels of their success with SHAFT, and long before the genre burnt itself out with the predictable pimps 'n' pushers 'n' "Kill Whitey" route. This one boasts a solid cast, and though it starts slow, that'll give you the opportunity to swig back a few and prepare for the violent finale.

Calvin Lockhart (no relation to June) stars as suave Los Angeles radio D.J. Frankie J. Parker ("The J is for Joy."), a fast-talking, narcissistic ladies' man. And when he meets the lovely Melinda Lewis (Vonetta McGee), he oozes with snaky charm, pours her full of champagne at a private boat-party, and takes her back to his (hilariously funky) bachelor pad—where they strip down and do the bone dance on the floor, in front of the blazing fireplace. He's a *real* man, all right. But don't think that this is just some smarmy, snail-paced ebony romance, because Melinda is soon brutally murdered in Frankie's apartment and he becomes the main suspect.

Since the cops are useless (so what else is new?), Frankie decides to track down her killers on his own, with his ex-old lady (the late, great Rosalind Cash, of THE OMEGA MAN fame) joining him for the final half. Along the way, they encounter a gun-totting female junkie, local pushers, and a racist gangland boss. If you have any complaints about the limp first half, those will vanish once Frankie goes psycho and has a righteously sadistic showdown at the palatial mansion of Mr. Big (Paul Stevens, star of the trippy 3-D pic, THE MASK).

This pic is also notable for giving Jim Kelly one of his earliest (and smallest) screen roles, before moving onto action classics like ENTER THE DRAGON and BLACK BELT JONES, here, playing a badass karate instructor who steals every scene and even gets to whupp the crap out of Frankie in class. In addition, Rockne Tarkington (BLACK SAMSON) co-stars as Tank, an old pal of Frankie's, who's gone from football stardom to being a gang lord's sniveling, whipping boy. Too bad Hugh A. Robertson doesn't display much directorial flair, except when it comes to his fashion and decor (non)sense. A mixed bag, but with enough bloody chaos and no-nonsense intentions to cut it as a minor-level, grindhouse relic.

DAVID LYNCH: DON'T LOOK AT ME (1989).

This French-produced, hour-long look at David Lynch tries its best not to be your standard, suck-up profile (even though director Guy Girard is obviously a fan). It opens with a short interview conducted at a Bob's Big Boy, and in a brilliant move, the camera films the discussion from outside---*through* the restaurant's venetian blind! Following this type of stylishly wacky route, Girard attempts to lens a Lynch-like portrait of Lynch himself. And though the narration is in French, sans subtitles, that only added to the Surrealism Factor of the final product.

Lynch's apartment is filmed like it was a higher-rent version of ERASERHEAD, and we watch him at work (dictating a script) and at play (admiring the beauty of an electric power plant and its high-tension wires). We also get him in a NYC. recording session with Julee Cruise, and (best of all) driving around Los Angeles in his convertible with the late, great Jack Nance and revisited an old ERASERHEAD locale, a reservoir entrance.

Despite these cool moments, if you're looking for any enlightenment on Lynch, forget it! He's a full-scale cipher, and far from the easiest person to get a straight answer from. His eternally calm demeanor remains unbroken, and he's so introverted that he barely looks at the camera—sometimes keeping his back to it. "It makes me uncomfortable to talk about meanings of things," he announces. "The meaning is a very personal thing." Of course, that type of reaction makes it difficult to do a probing documentary on the guy's work.

Instead, Girard simply follows him about, and sneaks in the occasional question, or quizs the guy using Polaroids from his movies. When asked about his reaction to dead bodies, Lynch rambles about their texture. Speaking of BLUE VELVET, he notes that "An ear, in a grassy field, with ants crawling on it—there's hardly anything better than that." He compares the making of a film to a *duck* (Don't ask). And when asked "Do you know what you're doing?" He matter-of-factly replies, "Not at all."

Personally, I'd watch Lynch rambling for an entire hour on *any* topic, but most viewers will get irritated at how he brushes off many questions with "I don't talk about those things." Still, what else would you expect from Lynch? A casual interview at poolside, with his masseuse and a dry martini? Sorry. If you couldn't already guess, this guy is as quietly whacked as his movies (possibly more so), and this film drives that point home with a vengeance.

MAD FOXES (19??).

After suffering through so many generic pics, I love coming across some unknown movie which, against all expectations, rips loose and takes you on a truly rancid joyride. This horribly-dubbed Euro-exploitation-masterwork from director Paul Gray kicks off with shitty rock music ("Easy Rocker" by Krokus) and is drenched in mindless, gratuitous, spontaneous violence. Within minutes, I was in heaven.

The film flows along with its own unfathomable logic. Where can you go after a fiery motorcycle crash? Jump-cut to a EuroTrash nightclub full of writhing, teenaged XANADU rejects! Then we meet our rich, scummy, thirty-nothing hero, Hal Martin, who's trying to get his 18-year-old, Babsy, to "lose her shyness" by plying her with champagne. Just as she succumbs to his charmlessness and Hal begins inspecting her dental work with his tongue, they're attacked by a gang of Nazi bikers, who're pissed that one of their brothers died in that earlier chopper accident. So they beat Hal senseless, pop his date's cherry, and put her in the hospital. Hal then decides to take on these "bastard hoodlums" with the help of some martial arts pals, but don't expect your ordinary, halt-assed vengeance pic.

The next clue that you're in the presence of schlock greatness is during a run-in between the bikers and a dozen, karate-chopping cretins, when the biker leader has his dick cut off! Then he has his (obviously fake) cock shoved into his own mouth, on screen! From then on, it's hardcore chaos, with people graphically machine-gunned by the dozen and Hal's entire family massacred, as these bikers combine the brutality of LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT with the rampant stupidity of Eric Von Zipper.

Best of all, nobody gets away clean in this skagbag scenario. Because even though Hal says he's soooo concerned about the abused Babsy, she's instantly forgotten the moment he picks up a horny hitchhikeress and takes her back to his parents' palatial home to play Hide The Maggot. Nice guy, eh? Starring Robert O'Neal, Laura Premica and Sally Sullivan, it's difficult to describe the joys of this creep-fest without seeing it for yourself. Chock full of (female and male) nudity and cheery violence, this whacked-out slaughter-fest showers the viewer in laff-a-minute bloodshed, right up to the final, crazed moments. My next questions: Who is director Paul Gray? Where is he now? Has he made more movies? I *need* to know!

TONGUE (Alpha Blue Archives; 1975).

Here's a sub-genre I've never covered: XXX-blaxploitation, which proudly combines the grindhouse with the jismhouse. On a purely technical level, this makes Rudy Ray Moore's slop-epics look like Bertolucci, but TONGUE also wallows in its own perverse charms. First off, there's that funky, mid-'70s veneer, complete with incredible threads, a soulful score (in "sex-o-phonic" sound), and big ratty afros that you wouldn't be able to squeeze through a narrow doorway. And what a theme song! "It's the greatest thrill,/ You'll get a chill / Like cold ice cream,/ It makes you scream / ...Tongue." (Hey, wasn't that an old Supremes tune?)

More important, the director, credited as only "K.B." (lemme guess...Kenneth Branagh? Ken Burns?), takes an odd route with his story. Unlike most pornos, where getting laid makes the lead male *happy*, the lead in this flick is one continually miserable motherfucker. Al Poe stars as Quasi, a seemingly ordinary black handyman who has one big problem, namely, a nine-inch tongue which puts Gene Simmons to shame. While visiting the queer Dr. Woodcock, the nurse plays voyeur during his exam, gets one look at Quasi's mouth, and calls in the aid of her horny gal pal, Cherry (Brigitte Maier, the lone white chick in the flick). From there on, Quasi is lured into becoming their boy toy, with the usual array of ugly sex scenes—from one gal masturbating with a light bulb, to an orgy featuring a bare-assed guy on keyboards.

Despite all of this screwing, there's little joy to any of it, because Quasi is still reeling from some bloodshed-filled trauma. The weirdest scenes involve Quasi just sitting alone in his apartment, as his voice-over contemplates his lousy life as a "big tongued pussy lapper." We watch him play chess by himself, look at his pet frog, and get more and more depressed. These scenes are so downbeat that you've got to admire the filmmakers' balls for keeping them in, since they'd obviously send most maggot-floggers into a fugue state. Personally, I loved 'em! Just don't expect your ordinary porno when you pop this baby into your VCR.

LUNCH (1972).

Curt McDowell will always be a SC fave, if only for directing THUNDERCRACK!, one of the greatest odd-sex 'n' high-camp epics of all time. Unfortunately, nothing else in his filmography matched that film's success. Originally a painter, McDowell moved to film in the late '60s, made a handful of features and shorts (often involving gay sexuality), and in 1987, died of AIDS at the age of 42, in San Francisco.

Curious to see some of his early work, I grabbed this no-budget X-rated feature, which had a successful run on the adult circuit. After watching it, I couldn't tell you why, although it does feature some surprisingly competent photography (which often makes the flick more creepy than erotic). But is it a *good* movie? Not on your fucking life! Sure, there are all the usual hardcore close-ups, but anyone expecting the dementia of THUNDERCRACK! will be sorely disappointed by its lack of humor (proof that scriptwriter George Kuchar had much to do with that later epic's success).

The 'plot' involves various sexual episodes between folks living in a small apartment building, as well as vivid fantasies of getting it on with your neighbors. Velvet Busch plays Gloria, the landlady, who's obsessed with giving head, Mark Ellinger is Dave Powers, who pays his rent in "his usual way," by schtupping Gloria, while Rick Mackota is The Painter.

All of the characters are flat and forgettable, while their array of situations include a black/white couple, a lesbian tryst, and more than a hint of male homoeroticism. At its best, McDowell gets creative with his editing, and screws about with the thin line between reality and the vividly imagined (such as a straight guy suddenly imagining himself sucking a dick). And boy, are these people unattractive! There are also plenty of pimply asses and bad skin (shot in luscious close-up, so their faces resemble a lunar landscape). This might give the film a streak of reality (unlike today's plastic-surgery-sponsored cum pageants), but there's still little reason to track this one down.

REDNECK REVENGE (SWV; 1996).

The title of this 55-minute pic is appropriate, since this is the ultimate revenge on any Yankee who endures this tame, southern-(brain)fried rotgut. Supposedly "based on actual incidents that really happened" and featuring a cast of honest to goodness crackers, we're taken to the in-bred depths of Anniston, Alabama; the *last* place on this planet I'd ever want to set foot in. Rick Montana is the main culprit behind this white trash crock—he scripted, co-directs (with Jamey More), wrote the original music, and even stars in the pic, playing himself!

The flick also features schlock kingpin David Friedman in *front* of the camera for a change, playing a rich local asshole who's trying to pressure Big Ray into selling his cantina (while turning in the movie's best performance). Instead, ex-lawman Montana buys into the bar, and soon gets to kick ass, serenade the local gals with his geee-tar, and train for the local Tough Man Contest—with Big Ray's bar at stake. Along the way, he's also dragged from a pick-up and has to save Big Ray's daughter (Connie Miller) from kidnappers.

This is no-budget slop, all right. But it's also fueled with loads of white trash charm and harkens back to the glory days of rural, drive-in swill like THE GIRL FROM TOBACCO ROAD. Even when the movie sucked, I loved the authentic hick touches, including its diners, a seedy carnival, and (best of all) what appears to be actual footage of a local Tough Man contest, which takes place in a high school gym! And where else can you see a two-minute-long plug for a custom cycle shop stuck in the middle of a movie's end credits?

As an added bonus, Something Weird tags the tape with another 45 minutes of nostalgic Southern 'culture,' including a one-reeler entitled THE OLD MAN'S BRIDE, about an old fart and his adulterous young bride, JENNIE: WIFE/CHILD, with another horny young wife, this time after a farm hand, plus toothless old coots, hot country gals in tiny dresses, and loads of cheap T&A which is arguably, more fun than the feature they're embellishing.

THE TIME TRAVELERS ($24.99 plus $3 p&h to: Kip Doto, P.O. Box 8050, Coral Springs, FL 33075; 1966).

Here's a misplaced oddity. A three-decades-old, sci-fi pic that was directed and written by Robert Durham—best known for playing "the American guy" in Japanese Saturday matinee faves like GODZILLA VS. MEGALON and DAGORA, THE SPACE MONSTER. Little did we know, while he was co-starring with giant, latex creatures in front of the camera, this guy was also tinkering on his *own* shoestring pic, which, considering its 50-minute running time, feels like an Asian OUTER LIMITS episode.

The Farringtons are just your typical American family, stationed in Japan and consisting of a US military dad (Durham), his wife, and snot-nosed daughter. But just as Durham plans a little free time with his family, he's suddenly called into duty. The nightmare begins when he drives into the

usually-bustling city and the streets are mysteriously empty, and returning home, discovers his family too has disappeared. The plot then spins into a paranoia-fest, as Durham gets increasingly creeped-out by this occurrence—only to be replaced by an evil, extraterrestrial doppelganger. Is this some type of time-twisting alien plan? Is it just a dream? Or is this guy going nuts?

Durham constructs an intriguing, dream-induced storyline that's a rare treat in this sort of low-rent production. He's also aided by his Japanese locales, which give it a fresh look. The only weak link are the limp performances, which betrays Durham's Toho influences, since all of the acting is on par with any average Godzilla movie. Trivia geeks will want to note that daughter Ann is played by a pre-teen Linda Purl, who would grow up to be a staple of such cheeseball TV-movies as LITTLE LADIES OF THE NIGHT, and shared the title role in the Donny Most epic, LEO & LOREE.

IT'S A REVOLUTION, MOTHER (SWV; 1968).

This self-proclaimed "documentary of love" from director Harry Kerwin is an unintentionally riotous mess. A head-first plunge into the late '60s counterculture, it mixes amazing footage with the type of heavyhanded, laugh-a-minute narration you'd find in your average Sunday School film. In charting this "revolution," the filmmakers juxtapose two different directions that the youth of America has taken.

On one hand, we join half-a-million kids protesting the Vietnam War in Washington DC, during a "March Against Death" rally, which has hippies lugging faux-coffins before the Capitol. Though the filmmakers obviously admire these peaceful hairballs, they also realized that they wouldn't have much of a movie if they only relied on their candlelight vigils. That problem is remedied with the opposing thread, which follows an East Coast biker club, The Aliens, during their Lifestyles of the Drunk and Degenerate (or as the film labels it, "a strange, cop-out world of their own making").

We get the rare opportunity to hang out with The Aliens and their cool choppers, as they discuss their liver-damaged lives (mostly in monosyllables), party on a NJ beach with their skanky squeezes, and host a Wesson Oil Party for one of their mamas. Unwashed and uncharismatic, these guys are the real thing, right down to watching one of these cretins pissing into a beer can (in close up, no less). These guys make THE WILD ANGELS look like THE LI'L RASCALS! And it's all laced with idiotic, purple-prose commentary, such as: "Man and machine. A new lifestyle. Something to worry about as man runs on the thin edge of losing his soul to the gear box and the axle. Something primitive and terrifying is happening..." It's hard-hitting! It's incessant! And after a while, you'll be doing Old Milwaukee spit-takes onto your TV screen.

On top of all this, there's also footage of a pathetic three-day rock concert, populated by vanloads of burnt-out flower children. Of course, when they mention that Billy Graham is going to show his fat face, you realize why this sad "festival" was quickly forgotten by all who attended. There's plenty of great footage to be found in this portrait of young people "doing their own thing." Unfortunately, it often feels like the filmmakers were scrambling for whatever youth snippets they could find, and don't know jack about their subject matter.

THE DEGENERATES [DeGenerazione] (VSoM; 1994).

This EuroHorror anthology combines nine short pics from a variety of young, unknown Italian directors. As usual in these cases, it's a mixed bag, and though all are playfully lensed, a few are also pretty inane. Don't expect any common themes either, because this is more like a compilation that a bunch of barroom pals tossed together. "Hey, we've all made a weird short film! Let's tack 'em together and sell the thing!" The main drawing card is a *very* short entry directed by Asia Argento (Dario's daughter, for anyone who's been in a coma for the past few years), and an appearance from her in another.

The amusing, but lightweight entries include the farcical "Home Delivery," in which a wife has a piece of furniture delivered to her home, but when the hulking delivery man meets her hubbie, it leads to murder..."Just Another Vampire Story" has a young man meeting a drunk, 200-year-old vampire, and taking him back to his place..."Empty Gift" takes place in a society where the nightly lottery is a blast...In Antonio Antonelli's paranoid-fantasy "Chain," a soccer team's discussion of how women chain men down takes on literal implications.. Then there's Asia Argento's "Prospective," a thin slice of surrealism, which is so brief it's difficult to tell if talent runs in the family.

The best of the lot includes Alberto Taraglio's nightmarish "Is TV Bad For the Kids?" in which a young girl is left alone with the TV as a babysitter. But while she sleeps, the set takes on a life of its own, slides across the room, and presents the upcoming day's headlines ("In tomorrow's news: Parents attend a dinner while their kid dies.")...A taxi driver in "India 21" gets a unique fare, when a disembodied voice (with its own briefcase, no less) demands to be taken to his destination. While the cabbie wonders if he's going nuts, this transforms into a strange and bittersweet ride.

Lovingly disturbing, Eleonora Fiorini's "Finally Together" has a relationship unraveling due to their dreams. In hers, he's slaughtering li'l creatures. In his, she's hand-cranking an over-sized drill bit into his skull. But without question, the funniest, oddest pic is Alessandro Valori's "Squeak!", which has a police informer attacked by a trio of heavy-metal, light-IQ'ed filmmakers, who almost turn him into the next victim in their real-life gore movie. Along with its nasty sense of humor, Asia Argento is the highpoint here, playing the luscious Lorna and showing off her lighter side (instead of playing psychos and rape victims in her dad's movies).

DALLAS DOLL (VSoM; 1994).

Despite its star, Sandra Bernhard, this Australian psycho-drama never made it to US shores. Once seeing it, that's no big surprise, because although nicely lensed by director Ann Turner (CELIA), it's an annoying pic, full of idiotic characters. Following in the tradition of (the much better) TEORAMA and BRIMSTONE AND TREACLE, the script revolves around a stranger who weasels into a household and turns it inside-out.

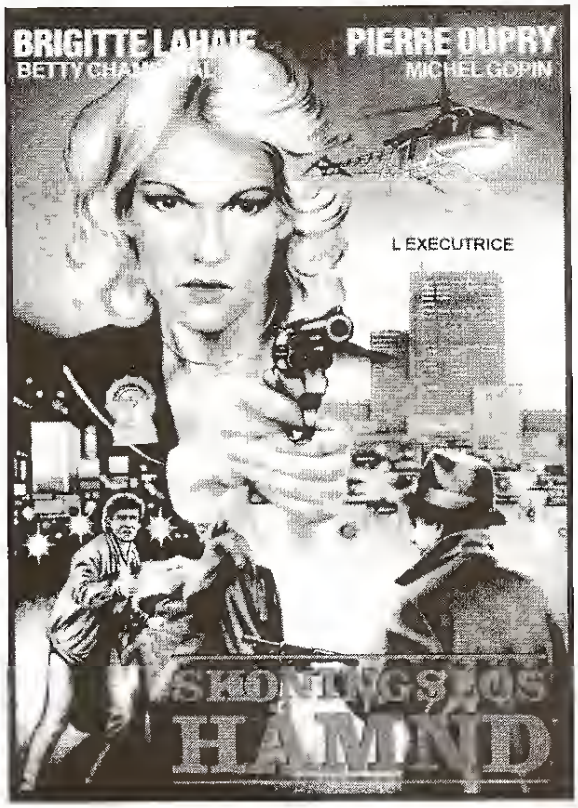
On a flight from NYC back to their home turf of Australia, teenaged Charlie (Jake Blundell) meets a vacationing Yank named Dallas Adair (Bernhard), who immediately comes off like a creep (to anyone with half a brainstem, that is). Nevertheless, Charlie takes a liking to her, and when Dallas has her leg chewed by his family's (normally-friendly) dog, she's asked to stay with them. Before long, Dallas begins to manipulate the family, while teaching Mom the pleasures of Strip Miniature Golf. But above all, it's Charlie who acts like a dolt. He spends his evenings playing voyeur on the scrawny Dallas, yet when his girlfriend wants to have sex with him, he panics like a pansy. Only younger sister Rastus (Rose Bryne) worries about her puppet-like family.

This American opportunist finally convinces the entire family to pull up stakes and move to a sheep farm, while seducing most of them in the process. The only mildly amusing business is when their blinders are finally removed and they realized they're all sleeping with the same person.

Despite all of these seductions, mindgames and even a UFO subplot, this is boring shit. Perhaps if they'd had someone more charismatic than Bernhard, I might've bought into this psycho-babble; as it is, she's little more than a scheming bitch, who flies into a hissy fit when she doesn't get her way. When we learn Dallas' big 'dream' is to build a bloody golf course, she suddenly becomes even more vapid than the rest of the cast. Dallas' intentions are so bloody obvious that the film ends up making most Australians look both spineless *and* stupid. The only exception is Victoria Longley, who plays Mom and brings a liberating strength to her role. It ain't much, but it's the most you're going to get from this misguided muddle.

L'EXECUTRICE [The Female Executioner] (Luminous; 1985).

Brigitte Lahaie is best known for her often undraped gigs in EuroHorror pics by Rollin and Franco, or her hardcore '70s porn. Even when Brigitte tried to shed her Triple-X roots—like with this French-made, urban police thriller—the filmmakers kept it as tawdry as possible, by kicking off with the money shot of a naked Brigitte rolling about in a hot tub.



It was difficult to figure out the precise details of the plot, since there were no English subtitles, but from what I could decipher, Lahaie plays a tough-talking cop—a cross between DIRTY HARRY and POLICE WOMAN—who's after some porno-movie-making, white-slaver scumbags (hmmm, old friends of hers?). With the aid of a handy ambulance, they've kidnapped a young girl from a hospital, but when she escapes, she's able to I.D. the female ringleader.

This is your average B-movie dreck, but with OK production values and slick action scenes, courtesy of writer-director Michel Caputo (a.k.a. M. Baudricourt). Best of all, Brigitte has a real role, instead of her old spread-'em-and-moan gigs. She gets to brandish a gun, hits the street for info, and chases after fugitives (sans brassiere, of course). But even though she beats the bejesus out of anybody who touches her without permission, don't confuse this with any feminist tract. Because Lahaie also ends up nearly raped in a garage, with her clothes sliced off with a straight razor (hey, that never happened to Clint Eastwood!). Of course, after losing a fellow cop in a showdown with the crooks, Lahaie has to take a long hot bath (the same one used in the opening credits), before going after the scum.

Lahaie-watchers will be sad to learn that she's only undraped for a couple very brief scenes, and required to act with her face, rather than her private parts, this time around. Yet even without subtitles, you can see why Brigitte's legit acting career never bloomed, since her on-screen expressiveness amount to one long, pouty glare. Still, if American cops looked anything like Lahaie, felons would be lining up around the block to be taken in by her.

THE WARRIOR (Blackest Heart; 1983).

I'm going to ask you to use your imagination for a moment. Close your eyes, and try to envision a supernatural-tinged, martial arts, prison movie that feels like it was directed by someone with the vision of Jodorowsky, but the filmmaking savvy of Doris Wishman. Open your eyes, and you've got THE WARRIOR. And you know you're in for a cheapjack treat when a film proudly boasts of "a cast of thousands," when it actually look more like a hundred (that is, if you count all the fake corpses).

Set in Indonesia, a bunch of revolutionaries are imprisoned for their crimes against the ruling Dutch tyrants, led by the sadistic Van Schram. When their brutalized leader, Jaka Sembung, escapes during a riot, Van Schram offers a 100 gulden reward for his capture, which brings all of the country's slimiest assassins out of the woodwork. Leading the pack is Kobar, a bald menace who spits fire, ignores pesky bullets, looks like Sid Haig on steroids, and is also the type of party animal who shows off his strength by snapping a bull's neck with his bare hands. More important, there's an old wizard (with teeth worse than Shane MacGowan's), who resurrects the body of the legendary Ki Item—initially, without his head.

The only problem with this exuberant hokum is that Jaka is just a musclebound, humorless dweeb who spends much of the movie flapping his gums about 'his People's oppression,' and indulging in mystical mumbo-jumbo. But after suffering through some gruesome torture (which includes having his eyes juicily punched out), he prays to Allah and suddenly acquires superhuman strength which allows him to tear down stone walls and bend steel bars—but still doesn't stop him from being turned into a pig for awhile (don't even ask...). Of course, Maria, Van Schram's daughter, falls for this swarthy rebel, which only leads to more dopey melodrama.

This flick is a trip, full of martial arts, gooey gore, political unrest, the power of prayer, people flying about, and a full-scale overthrow of the government. What else could you possibly ask for? How about a wizard getting his leg chopped off in battle, only to have it fly about and kick the hero in the face, before reattaching itself? Plus, the eye transplant footage is particularly grisly---it's almost as if you're suddenly in the middle of a Fulci flick. Starring Barry Prima, W.D. Mochtar and Eva Arnez, and directed by Sisworo Gautama Putra (a.k.a. Sam Gardner), this is a slaphappy chunk of brain-softening exploitation. Yeah!

VAMPIRA (1996).

This offbeat Finnish documentary takes a 61-minute journey into the life of Maila Nurmi—best known to film freaks as seductive horror-movie hostess Vampira. But there was more to her career than just a role in PLAN 9, and the film spends only 10 minutes on her dealings with Ed Wood Jr. Instead, director Mika J. Ripatti lets the still-feisty old gal spin her own tale.

Nurmi takes us from her beginnings in a midnight revue on Broadway (playing a vampire), to LA pin-up jobs, and in 1954, landing a gig hosting the late night movies on KABC-TV. This self-described "cowlick on the scalp of humanity" also explains how she based her Vampira look on TERRY AND THE PIRATES' Dragon Lady, and this allowed the normally shy Nurmi to indulge in her most bizarre fantasies. Admitting that she always felt like she was from another planet (and everyone else in the world were "hollow mannequins"), she takes us on a tour of her past, at one point revisiting the now-closed theatre which held the raucous premiere of PLAN 9.

The most fascinating bits involve her friendship with kindred-spirit James Dean, as they tooled around Sunset Boulevard together, and how she even used him as an extra for a Vampira skit. Best of all, Nurmi describes her more extremes tans, including one woman who fell to her knees before her in the middle of Denny's, and how her Vampira character attracts "some very unbalanced types," including necrophiles.

Meanwhile, Ripatti has a field day piecing this together, in an effort to make this portrait more than just a bunch of talking heads. He sneaks in clips of a dominatrix and her shackled boy toy, tarot card readers, dramatic recreations of her Finnish roots, plus a clip of Gig Young and James Dean in an educational short about safe driving. The *piece de resistance* is a bizarre little comedy skit with Nurmi as an evil old lady who swills booze in front of her home and tucks around with anyone who comes along. Although I often wished for an additional perspective on the events, instead of only seeing Nurmi's take, this is still a beautifully crafted, wildly disjointed ode to old Hollywood and one of its most fascinating survivors.

MAD MEX: THE BLACKFIGHTER (Luminous; 1978).

Few have heard of this blaxploitation take on THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME, because as far as I can tell, this ingratiatingly inept action pic never played the Deuce. If it had, director/scripter/star Max H. Boulois could've well become another in the long line of Fred Williamson-wannabees. Cut-rate and satisfyingly sadistic, it also has a goofy charm—especially if you've got a couple 40's at your side.

Based on "real facts" (you won't find any of those 'false facts' here, folks), it begins with a 1975 North Vietnam prologue and our black Rambo, Joe Johnson (Boulois, who looks like Ice Cube's older brother), on the run from the VC. Much later, in New Jersey, this ex-POW, ex-football star, and generally pissed-off Brother is now a gym-owner who's deep in debt to loan sharks. Suddenly, he's offered a million bucks to become the prey in a human big game hunt—and he figures that if he could walk the length of Vietnam with a wounded buddy on his shoulder during the intro, *this'll* be a breeze.

Blindfolded, he's driven down the Jersey Turnpike and all the way to Florida, then left in the middle of the woods in only his socks, gym shorts and tank top. Of course, the hunters are all prissy, rich (and do I even need to add, white?) racists, who consider black men fine game because they're "agile as

a monkey." In a sweet plot twist, Joe turns the tables and wins the game halfway into the movie. Unfortunately, these guys don't play fair and even after he's back on his urban home turf, they're still after his black ass.

Meanwhile, in Washington DC (we know that because they show us a Texaco road map of the area), a government office (hence, the framed picture of Jimmy Carter prominently on a table) is on the trail of these manhunters, with a female agent named Mary Ann on the case. But since they're mostly white, you can expect the worst from them too.

There's plenty of low-grade action, nice shots of Times Square, plus a few righteous moments—such as when Joe turns the tables and seeks revenge on the scumbag head of the organization, played by Tom Hernandez. Boulois has plenty of on-screen attitude and little acting talent (though much of that could be due to the hideous post-production dubbing), but when it comes to this type of mindless fare, a healthy dose of machismo and several dead honkys are more than enough to carry it along.

PIRANHA (Video Dungeon; 1980).

Every self-respected horror fan knows about Joe Dante's PIRANHA, so I was excited by the idea of a South American knock-off starring the legendary William Smith. Don't get your hopes up. Because "Piranha" turns out to be Smith's nickname in the flick, and this is little more than a dull jungle adventure with only a fleeting mention of any *real* piranhas in the script.

Americans Arthur Greene (Tom Simcox) and his lovely sister Terry (Ahna Capri) journey to Venezuela to take some photos of unexplored jungle regions, with the help of guide Jim Pendrake (Peter Brown). And Terry is the type of ditz who blows a gasket when Pendrake says he's (wisely) bringing a pistol on their dangerous expedition, yet later wanders off alone and is attacked by a rattler. Or better still, blithely washes her feet in a pond brimming with (unseen) piranha. This portion of the pic is insufferable, because when we're not nodding off during the nature photography padding, we're watching these dolts riding cycles down rural trails—accompanied by the eardrum-softening folk tune, "Love All Things That Love the Sun." EASY RIDER, it ain't.

Things pick up when the trio stops for the night and (finally) meets William Smith as Caribe, a notorious local hunter. And you can immediately tell he's the bad guy, because he smiles when he shoots a defenseless animal. Caribe then volunteers to take the constantly pie-eyed Arthur to a diamond mine he keeps babbling about, but first, a stop at a shithole village where all the diamond buyers and diggers reside (complete with frighteningly authentic hovels, stone-age equipment, and third-world extras).

Thick-necked Smith does his best, but this Amazon idiocy is so limp that even he can't save it. Director Bill Gibson gets points for hauling the cast and crew into the actual jungle—this ain't no backlot—but then, wastes all of this local color on a dull-as-dirt story. When Caribe goes on his long-overdue rampage and burns down the village, you'll wish he'd done the same to the film's negative. At least fans of Smith's biker days will enjoy an in-joke, when he's challenged to a motorcycle race and asked, "Do you ever ride a bike?" Nowadays, I doubt Smith even remembers making this dreck—or, at least, I hope he doesn't.

A BULLET FOR THE GENERAL [Quien Sabe?] (Luminous; 1966).

There were a shitload of spaghetti westerns made in the late '60s, and this is one of the very best. Director Damiano Damiani keep the story brimming with the type of scummy characters and bloodshed you've come to expect from the genre, while scripters Salvatore Laurani and Franco Solinas (BURN!, THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS) sneak a little political subtext in between the action-packed set pieces. The video is relatively easy to locate in the US, but only in a truncated print—so my suggestion is to bust your ass and dig up a European dupe, which is both 20 minutes longer and beautifully letterboxed.

Lensed in Spain, the setting is the Mexican Revolution, with Gian Maria Volonté playing bandit leader El Chuncho, and Klaus Kinski (with flowing, dirty blond hair) as Chuncho's crazy religious brother, Santo. While ambushing a train in order to steal a shipment of guns (and killing as many soldiers as they can, while they're at it), these rebels are helped out by a "young kid" Gringo (Lou Castel), who joins their ranks and treks around the desert in his pinstripe suit and fedora.

Since Castel is the only Anglo is the bunch, he's good at posing as a 'righteous' American who brings El Chuncho in for arrest; only to murder the commandant once inside the HQ and ride off with his arsenal. In addition, lovely Martine Beswick (DR. JEKYLL AND SISTER HYDE), the lone female in the band, is adept at infiltrating a fort as a whore, and then blasting a big-ass hole in the wall with a trunkful of dynamite. The story gets heavier when El Chuncho liberates the stinky li'l town of San Miguel, and decides to stay and continue protecting the populace—who couldn't write their own names in the dirt with a stick, much less aim a gun. Meanwhile, Castel's ever-cool demeanor hides his real motives.

These bandits are a foul lot, for sure, but at least El Chuncho realizes (too late) how he's sold his soul for a few pesos. Of course, the Mexican authorities are even worse, cold-hearted bastards. There are terrific performances all around though, and while it's odd to see Kinski as a pious do-gooder, that doesn't stop him from turning into a raving lunatic and lobbing a few grenades along the way. Beautifully lensed and full of engaging characters, other Pastaland directors could've learned a thing or two about making a western from this impressive EuroOater.

STARFIGHTERS [Luchadores de Las Estrellas] (VSoM; 1992).

For all of you pathetic souls who've been mourning the lack of Mexploitation Sci-Fi Female Wrestling movies, here a new one for you to munch on. But although director Rodolfo Lopezreal strives for the same logic-be-damned idiocy of the early Santo-style pics, it lacks the raw, innocent charm of its antecedents.

It begins when a couple of young lovers park their car in the middle of nowhere to neck, but are instead interrupted from their foreplay by a huge, flaming meteorite, which lands nearby. Out climbs a muscle-bound alien named Nitron (in wrestling face paint) and his trio of half-pint lackeys, who roam the city streets and promptly check out a local nightclub.

We then meet Rosa (Gloria Mayo), a masked female wrestler. Of course, when this blonde bombshell isn't in the ring (or sitting around a swanky cafe with her male wrestling pals--all of them still in their dumb-ass masks!), she has a secret identity as a reporter. In fact, her two male compadres are so dim-witted that they flirt with both of her identities, never realizing they're the same broad. Rosa has been having bad dreams about these invaders, and soon they're on her trail, because although the vampire-like Nitron sucks the blood out of party girls' forearms, he needs Rosa's blood to make him immortal!

If you couldn't already surmise, there's not a lot of common sense in this outing, and the Mexican cops must be as stupid as the US ones if they don't notice a 7-foot-tall intergalactic goon kidnapping earth women. Even sillier, an hour into the movie, Rosa suddenly remembers that she's actually a princess from another planet! What a load! Even worse, Rosa is a total wimp; running away from trouble, getting tossed about by the neanderthal villain, and is finally rescued by her two pea-brained Ring pals.

For a '90s outing, this is also surprisingly tame, and a higher Sleaze Factor wouldn't have hurt. Instead, all we get is endless, cut-rate wrestling footage, while the scariest sight is watching the midget aliens boogieing on the dance floor. They even leave it open for a sequel! Maybe not.

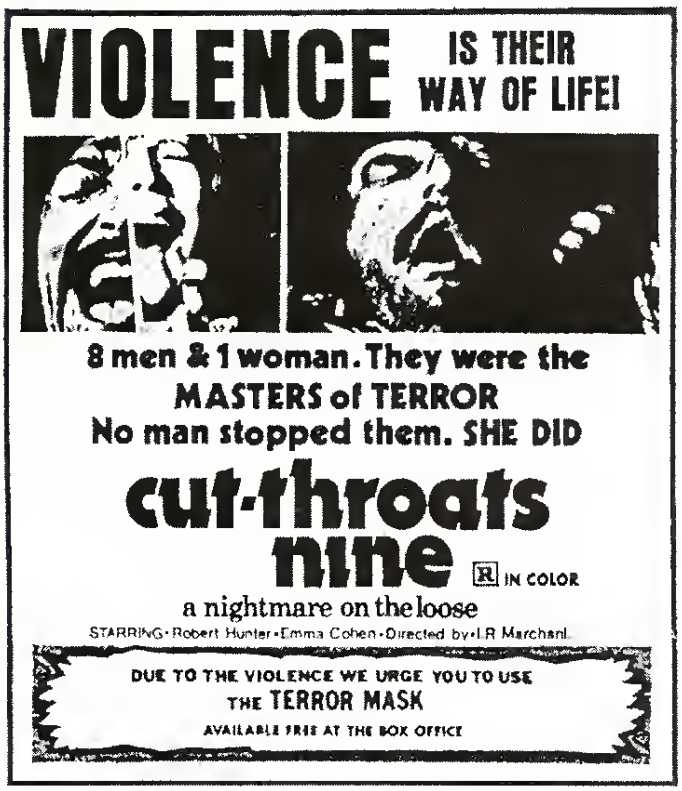
CUT-THROATS NINE [Condenados a Vivir] (1971; US release 1973).

This unassuming li'l Western from Spain might not seem that shocking today, in light of the industry's more recent, grue-strewn cinematic strides, but it was pretty startling during its day, thanks to its blanket ot casual sadism. Along the way, throats are slit, a woman's head is blown open, a bartender is macheted and hung from a hook, and it's all thanks to director Joaquin Romero Marchent.

The plot has seven ruthless prisoners, all sentenced to life for various heinous crimes, shackled together and transported across the snowy wilderness. But when the team is ambushed by thieves looking for a gold shipment and all of the guards are killed, this baker's-half-dozen of convicts *almost* wind up tree. Unfortunately for them, Cavalry Sergeant Brown (Robert Hundar) and his pretty young daughter Cathy (Emma Cohan) also survive, and the pigheaded Brown decides to take this chain gang to the faraway fort on foot.

From here on in, it's an endurance test. When one of the convicts is sick and slows 'em down, the others murder him and unflinchingly chop off the corpse's foot in order to separate him from their leggings. Every grubby dirtbag in this pic is ultimately out for themselves, and that includes Brown, who's convinced that one of the prisoners killed his wife, and is willing to murder all of them in order to find out who. In turn, they vow their revenge on Brown (accompanied by a hilariously homicidal rewording of "My Darling Clementine"); and if you couldn't already guess, innocent Cathy is going to wind up rape bait somewhere along the way.

Once freed from the Sergeant, these 'cut throats' go through so much shit that you almost begin to like them, as they trudge along, starve, and whittle down their ranks. There are even a few genuinely clever bits toward the end, including a secret cache of gold and a terrific, nihilistic ending at the hands of the lovesick Cathy—who, in a devilish twist, falls for the prisoner who gutted her mom. Don't you love a happy ending? Well, you aren't going to find one here! Crude and cruel, this is a no-nonsense, deviant's delight.



THE ANAL DWARF (19??).

I felt compelled to review this porno loop, since I'd heard rumors about it for years. Besides, how could anyone pass up a hardcore short starring FANTASY ISLAND's Tattoo, Herve Villechaize? Honesty, I wouldn't have put it past the guy, since he popped up in some crazy shit during his all-too-brief career, including the classic FORBIDDEN ZONE, the Oliver Stone debut SEIZURE, and Martin Brest's HOT TOMORROWS.

Sorry to report, Herve-completists, it simply ain't him. In fact, it's not even remotely him, and the only similarity is that both performers would only come up to a woman's navel. So forget the hype, which was apparently generated by someone who thinks all dwarves look alike.

Instead, this is nine whopping minutes of crude muck. A silent XXX-short that kicks off with a chunky brunette fingering herself, when suddenly, a leering dwarf appears on her staircase. After he fondles her a bit, she puts him up on a riser and sucks him, and then he screws her up the ass (hence the title). Is it erotic? Nope. Ugly as shit? Absolutely! And when his balls hang down into the camera lenses, I thanked god this swill wasn't in 3-D. Hell, there aren't even any credits, so I can't rag on the people who cranked out this limp, lame 'celeb' rip-off.

THE WILD EAST (1993).

This Soviet-made film is one of the loopiest sci-fi films in quite a while. Violent, goofy and altogether ridiculous, try to imagine THE ROAD WARRIOR meets THE SEVEN SAMURAI in THE TERROR OF TINY TOWN. You can't? Well, director-writer Rashid Nougmanov could, and after the home turf mega-success of his '89 debut, THE NEEDLE (about the drug scene in the Soviet Union), he was able to cobble together this delirious hodgepodge of exploitation genres—including spaghetti westerns, biker movies, and plenty of slap-happy post-apocalyptic carnage.

A ragtag community of dwarves and midgets (remnants of a pre-war circus) called The Solar Children are being shaken down and murdered by a vicious motorcycle gang (consisting of your typical, AIP-era, beer-swilling dirtbags). Deciding to fight back against these bandits, they head into town (actually, a handful of rundown shacks in the middle of nowhere) and begin recruiting mercenaries for the task.

They end up with slew of unlikely heroes, including a drunkard named Beatnik, a self-absorbed, blonde Asian chick named Marilyn (Zhanna Isina); a kill-crazed Rambo-clone who shoots at anything that moves; and their leader, a nameless, Leone-esque loner in an old west duster (Konstantin Fyodorov). Heading to the halt-pint village in their convertible, they teach the waist-highs how to fend for themselves and prepare for the inevitable invasion. From then on, the film drops its 'weird but cute' veneer, and begins to get downright vicious, with characters dropping like flies.

You won't have much sympathy for these Solar Children though, since most of 'em are sniveling wimps who run scared at the first hint ot danger, and have a village elder who looks like a wizened Paul Williams. On the other hand, the motorcycle savages are meant to represent the decadent American way (that's made obvious when Skull, their leader, dries himself off with a US Dollar bath towel), and looking at their parties, are the only characters having any legitimate fun. The pacing will seem slow for folks weaned on US schlock, but Nougmanov's bizarre conceit keeps you perpetually off-balance, right down to its cool but pretentious finale. Far from a new cult classic, it certainly enjoys giving all of these genre clichés a screwy, Soviet spin.

GANG WARS (1975).

This hilarious hodgepodge of trash genres had everything needed to keep an old Times Square audience smiling (when they weren't nodding off, that is), combining martial arts, mystical hooey, street gangs, amateur acting, and a plot that doesn't make a lick ot sense. And if memory serves me correct, this is the first NYC gang film to open with a 200 BC prologue in China—with a bunch of karate guys in their p.j.'s burying an amulet, and then committing suicide to keep its location a secret.

Cutting to the present, a black Manhattan martial arts instructor, Luke, visits China with his weaselly Spanish buddy, Rodan (Wilfredo Roldan). While Luke is fine-tuning his kung fu skills, Rodan wanders off, finds the amulet and accidentally resurrects a Chinese demon. After that, director Barry Rosen hits the mean streets of The Big Apple, with Luke and Rodan back at home, and the creature following them inside the body of an involuntary human host (who staggers about with ping-pong ball eyes). Stumbling down into the 135th Street subway tunnels, the monster finds a new home under the streets of Harlem, and begins luring saps into the tunnels and shredding them.

Above ground, the street gang story kicks in, with the Tong (or as they're lovingly referred to, "Chinese niggers") rip off Rodan's stash and fuel a gang war between The Black Spades and The Red Dragons. But even the usually invincible Tong are scared shitless when they see Rodan's new medallion, made from this evil Chinese relic. The demon needs that amulet to become indestructible, and if you couldn't guess, the finale has The Chinese Subway Monster vs. The Funky Black Kung Fu Master.

Wouldya believe it took *five* people to write this slop? And New Yorkers will get a laugh out of its lack of urban continuity, such as a simple foot chase that begins in Chinatown and ends in Harlem—only 140 blocks away! As Luke, War Hawk Tanzania sports some out-of-sight '70s threads, but is basically a 3rd-rate Jim Kelly. And the only recognizable face is gonzo

performance artist Brother Theodore, playing a priest! Unfortunately, it's little more than an unbilled cameo for the old guy, which has him ranting a snippet from his long-running stage show outside a subway entrance. The pic also scrimps on FX by barely showing us this "deformed monster." Since it can change form, it's often portrayed by a supporting cast member, and at one point, it even becomes invisible! Talking about cost cutting! This hilarious flick provides a quick fix for anyone needing a blast from the grindhouse past.

THE ROLLER BLADE SEVEN (1992) and SAMURAI VAMPIRE BIKERS FROM HELL (1992).

What do these two pics have in common, besides being low-budget, stupid and pathetic? They both star Scott Shaw, and after these reviews I'm sure he'll be sorry he sent the videos to me. At least they earn a couple of meager points for being *really weird* pieces of trash.

We start with the third in director Donald Jackson's ever-more-cut-rate ROLLER BLADE series. This entry doesn't make a lick of sense, so just accept that fact, and revel in its stupidity. Set in a future society full of sexy, roller-skating, ninja nuns, Scott Shaw stars as Hawk (another MAD MAX knock-off) who has to save Sister Sparrow from the "Wheel Zone." Full of over-baked dialogue and rollerblading (zzzz...), Shaw plays with his samurai sword, rides his bike, offs desert punks, and (mostly) deals with cameos from various B-movie vets (all of whom look stoned).

Karen Black turns up as a Tarot chick who feeds Shaw some mushrooms and walks through a makeshift cemetery (shades of EASY RIDER!); Rhonda Shear is a badly-permed Amazon guard; Frank Stallone is the Black Knight, while Joe Estevez has all of the mannerisms of brother Martin Sheen, but none of the talent. Then there's Don Stroud, who rambles all-too-convincingly, and stands around the desert in only a sports coat, swim trunks, top hat, and knee pads. Saddest of all is action-god William Smith, who's bearded, badly shot, and sits in a wheelchair the whole time, babbling in close-up. This is *far* from a shining on-screen moment. Lacking any cheap sex or hardcore violence for baser amusement value, the only positive thing you can say about this fiasco is that it's sometimes so inept that it borders on the surreal.

In the even *lower*-budgeted SAMURAI VAMPIRE, Shaw took on roles as star, director and co-writer. As long-haired Alexander Hell, he leaves the entrance to the underworld (which looks like your basic warehouse, and is guarded by a couple guys with samurai swords), with the job of rounding up a band of Samurai Vampire Bikers, who escaped from Hades and are loose in California. In addition, enter scripting partner Kenneth H. Kim as a topside vampire named Katana, and together they provide plenty of low-grade martial arts hijinx. Moving with its own crusty logic (and without all those standard worries about logic or coherency),the story includes a seedy vampire hunter who'd look more comfortable in the cast of BARFLY, and Douglas Jackson popping up as Lucas, a high honcho Evil Dude.

This thing is so cheesy it's less a low-budget feature than a really expensive home movie. Then again, how can you *not* appreciate the idea of the two scriptwriters writing heroic roles for themselves, which have them beating up everyone in sight? If you were in their place, wouldn't *you*? Though technically wretched, it's exuberantly goofy and feels like it was thrown together on a slow (not to mention, drunken) weekend.

THE DEAD ARE ALIVE [L'Etrusco Uccidi Encore] (Luminous; 1972).

Although promoted like it was a new Living Dead movie, this generic, overseas thriller doesn't have a reanimated corpse in sight. Instead, it's more of a low-rent giallo, featuring a pack of psychologically screwed-up characters and a roster of fresh corpses. Director Armando Crispino (AUTOPSY) pours on the mood, with the help of Erico Manczer's widescreen photography, but it rarely comes together into anything more than typical EuroTrash—complete with the usual, slumming American leads.

Samantha Eggar and Alex Cord star as U.S. archaeologists in Italy, working on an ancient Etruscan tomb. Drunken Jason (Cord) is so hot for Myra (Eggar) that he almost rapes her in the middle of the excavation. And though her own hubbie (John Marley) isn't exactly a prize, she brushes Cord off. Trouble begins when a pair of teens sneak into the 5th century burial tomb and begin making out, only to end up beaten to bloody pulps, and laid out like ceremonial corpses. Sure, the idea of a resurrected demon/god named Tuchulka is bandied about, but that's ditched early on, when the cops suspect Cord is the killer because of his alcoholic amnesia—not to mention, his history of attempted murder.

In between the corpses, plenty of film stock is wasted on the leads' romantic tribulations, and by the end, this turns into just another self-serious, convoluted murder mystery. The only highlight is Marley (best remembered for sharing a bed with a horse's head in THE GODFATHER) as a mean-spirited "Maestro," who's in Italy preparing for a concert. The rest of the cast is comprised of your basic European nobodies, including Horst Frank as a "faggot choreographer." Any bloodshed is brief and, even by that era's horror standards, pretty tame.

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ACTS OF CONFESSION '72. Kim Durey. Cyndee Summers. Nun taking final vows tormented by recurring dreams in which she has sex with nuns, priests & friars. Historically accurate Renaissance artwork with beautiful production values. 1st time on video! D: Anthony Spinelli

AFFAIRS OF JANICE '76. Annie Sprinkle. C.J. Laing. Zebedy Colt. Husband insane with jealousy plots double murder executed by spraying victims with silver paint & suspending them from ceiling. Annie does her specialty! D: Zebedy Colt

ANAL ULTRA VIXENS 1970-79. Linda McDowell(pictured), Vanessa Del Rio, Lisa Deleeuw, John Holmes. Busty starlets in superior all anal loop collection. Disco soundtrack.

ANNA OBSESSED '77. John Leslie. Annette Haven. Constance Money. Leather clad stalker violates women at gunpoint in powerfully erotic thriller. Uncut

DEVIL'S DUE '75. Andrea True. Young runaway escapes abusive men, finding happy home with cult of satanic lesbians. Slow-motion scenes of sacrifice!

BARONESS NICA '75. Cruel, foul-mouthed dommatrix scars up lowly slave with severe whipping. Ultra perverse New York sleeze

BIZARRE STYLES '81. Annie Sprinkle, Vanessa Del Rio. Fashion show becomes carnival of painful perversion. Uncut Avon Production!

CALL ME ANGEL SIR! '76. Annie Sprinkle. Depraved Aunt seduces and abuses orphan girl. You will see Annie fuck a dwarf!

THE DEVIL INSIDE HER '76. Terri Hall, Zebedy Colt, Annie Sprinkle. Annie endures heavy S/S humiliation in demon infested tale of sexual mayhem. Debut classic by Zebedy Colt. Uncut.

THE CHATEAU '73. Sandy Carey. German slavers capture and brutalize beautiful woman. Includes Bonus S/M footage

CANDY STRIPERS '78. Chris Cassidy, Amber Hunt. SCREW'S best film of the year 1978. HUSTLER'S Highest Rating! Best copy ever made available! From a mint UNCUT 16mm print!

CHINA DESADE '77. Linda Wong. Mercenary infiltrates den of crazed sadist to free Chinese girl from fiend's web of whores and horror. An overdose of sex & violence.

THE CHEATERS '73. Rick Cassidy. Bikers torment & rape rival gang's big-breasted cycle chicks. Homecoming queen from "Swinging Sorority Girls" does hardcore.

CUMMING ATTRACTIONS V.2. 85m. Tattooed Ladies, Illusions of A Lady, Blue Heat, Fetishes of Monique, Forbidden Ways, Badge 69, Insatiable, Porno Mondo, Tijuana Blue, Million Dollar Mona (Candy Samples). Mindblowers & 26 more 1st time on video XXX trailers.

DOMINATRIX WITHOUT MERCY '76. C.J. wears panties overhead while two men abuse her. Vanessa barks like a dog. Jamie swallows a dildo & hides in a closet for 3 hours. Marlene showers her slave with humiliation. Classic.

DOUBLE FEATURE #1

FLOSSIE A VENUS OF 15 '73. Variation on Lolita theme based on a story by Algenon Swinburn. **FANNY HILL** '73. Story of 15 yr. old orphan ending up in English house of ill repute. Based on the story by John Cleland.

DIVERSIONS '76. Beautiful women on lonely train ride imagines sex with a vampire, rape by soldiers, bloody knife murder & much more! Ultra Rarity from England.

THE DOMINATORS circa '75. Early rare loops document extreme S/M domination in SWEET BITCH, WHITE SLAVE, MASKED RAPISTS, SADIST ORGY, MISTRESS OF DARKNESS, KISS OF DEATH & many more!

ECSTACY IN BLUE '78. Annie Sprinkle. C.J. Laing. Terri Hall. Hypnotic cult of women worship satanic guru's 10.5 inches & perform acts of degradation.

EUROSLEAZE circa '75. Extremely rare loops from Germany--beautiful women, high production values & vivid color! Includes scenes edited from the U.S. release of SENSATIONAL JANINE.

FIRE DOWN BELOW '74 a.k.a. PERVERTED PASSION. Frank, a boozed up degenerate, cruises Hollywood searching for women to ogle, rape and murder. D: Cindy Lou Sutters (Ray Dennis Steckler)

FORBIDDEN SEXUALITY 1970-75. Documents Necrophilia, Barbaric Rape & Abduction, Hooked Amputee, G/S, F/F, Electrocution, Nuns & more! WARNING: Attacks your senses with brutal, shocking imagery!

ELEVATOR '72. Candy Samples. Sandy Carey. Slender cutie pie locked in elevator makes sensual love to sweet man, while CANDY shows off bra busting talents.

HISTORY OF RAPE-V.2. circa '75. Documents rape in XXX cinema. WARNING! This film reaches the absolute limits in sexual brutality! Jamie Gillis goes insane with a butcher knife; Nazi's savagely tear into their female prey-- and that's just the tip of the iceberg!

FEMMES DE SADE '76. Monique Starr, Abigail Clayton. Frankenstein look-alike abuses San Francisco hookers who get revenge at elaborate S/M party! HUSTLER writes, "unbelievably explicit in it's spectrum of sexual deviations..." D: Alex DeRenzy.

INVASION OF THE LOVE DRONES '79. Bree Anthony. Interstellar hornies known as the "Ora Gasms" invade earth with zombie love slaves! Uncut XXX version.

LITTLE ORPHAN DUSTY '76. Rhonda Jo Petty, John Holmes. Rapist bikers take lost runaway deep into the woods. Uncut.

MONA THE VIRGIN NYMPH '70 B/W. Fifi Watson. Bride to be refuses intercourse but loves giving head to fiance & strangers. 1st XXX to gain widespread distribution. P: Bill Osco. D: Howard Ziehm. Best copy available anywhere.

MORE WAYS THAN ONE '73. Linda Loveall. Carla loves it up the rear. She keeps a dum dum on hand who goes to her ass like a dog to Alpo. Linda Loveall is one dynamite chick! A Backdoor Production.

HARDCORE '73. The ULTIMATE big budget, blood splattered XXX horror fantasy! Hospital death cult terrorize teenage Maria with Necrophilia, Meathooks, Castration, Lesbian Nurses, Deathdreams, Decapitation, Throat Slashings, Blood Orgies & more. Do not miss this film!

NIGHT CALLER '75. Monique Starr. Phone freak plays "mommy games" with hookers and torments lonely women. Grim, atmospheric sickie.

ORIENTAL BLUE '75. C.J. Laing, Bree Anthony, Jamie Gillis. Madame Blue, a procurer of female flesh, feuds with her ace pimp who refuses to release lovely young slave girl. Filmed in NYC's Chinatown.

ORIENTAL TECHNIQUES OF PAIN & PLEASURE circa '80. Annie Sprinkle. Mistress Candice. Hostage females witness a thousand abominable atrocities! An uncut Avon production.

PARTNERSHIP '73. Rene Bond, Rick Cassidy. Con artist takes buddy for ride in business scam. Features slender blonde in snakeskin panties & red leather boots! Includes Rene Bond in softcore version of KIM COMES HOME.

I WANT YOU '74. Uschi Digard, John Holmes. Psychiatrist uses "physical therapy" to cure sexually frustrated housewife. Uschi is hot in a leopard skin bikini!

PRIVATE, PRIVATE '73. Rene Bond, Rick Lutz. Private eye cracks lame jokes while outwitting incompetent bankrobbers. Rene makes it with a lovely Chinese Doll!

RAPE VICTIMS '75. Vanessa Del Rio, Bonnie. suffers terrifying rape then visits clinic where victims unburden themselves of guilt feelings.

REVENGE & PUNISHMENT '76. Tara Chung. Angry woman goes after sleazy senator who killed her sister. Brutal S/M, gynecological exams, nasty nurses... Gritty, New York trash! D: Joe Davian.

DOUBLE FEATURE #5 - NIGHT OF SUBMISSION. '76. Annie Sprinkle, Vanessa Del Rio, C.J. Laing. NYC voodoo cult practice ritualistic S/M!

GIRL IN A BASKET '73. Rene Bond. Two freaks "Mommy & Daddy" kidnap virgin for use in twisted rape & fetish games.

SEDUCTION OF LYN CARTER '74. Andrea True, Jamie Gillis. Married woman repeatedly defiled by demented sex researcher. Andrea's best. D: Anthony Spinelli

SEX PROPHET '73. Rick Cassidy, Cyndee Summers, Nina Fause. Phony guru persuades women to suck him off with ramblings about the "poetry of life". Includes catchy original tune titled "Follow the Windsong."

SEX RINK '76. Teenage girls throw senior bash at local roller rink. Tight satin shorts, tube sox, super skates & glitter highlight this cum soaked gem! D: Cindy Lou Sutters (Ray Dennis Steckler)

SUBURBAN SATANIST '74. John Holmes. Barney, a weekend satanist, shrieks with evil laughter, spouts Lucifer mumbo jumbo to his horny flock & screws big breasted Rosemary. Hail Barnabus! Includes bonus shorts LUCIFER'S LUST & THE SATANIST.

HISTORY OF RAPE 1970-75. Documents rape in XXX cinema. Includes *TERRORIZED VIRGIN*, Lasse Braun's *VIOLENCE* & much more. WARNING: Highly graphic images of unrelenting sexual brutality.

SATAN WAS A LADY '75. Annie Sprinkle. Bree Anthony. Terri Hall. Young Annie in bondage radiates juicy enthusiasm.

TALES OF THE BIZARRE circa '80. Cheri Champagne. Slumber party girls tell stories of extreme degradation. Uncut Avon Production!

TAMING OF REBECCA circa '80. Sharon Mitchell. Rebecca escapes father's torment at school for wayward youth. Little does she know her nightmare has just begun! Uncut Avon Production.

TEENAGE DESSERT '76. High School dropout cruises Venice beach on roller skates, searching for sexy adventures. D: Cindy Lou Sutters (Ray Dennis Steckler)

SUPERKNOCKERS '69-79. Candy Samples. Loop collection highlights HUGE breasted models and we're talking 50-EEE & bigger! Includes BIG TIT PIRATE, MRS. BIG TITS, BIG DOLLY, HUGE TITS, BULL RIDER & more!

TERRI'S REVENGE '76. Terri Hall. Radical New York women start W.A.R. (Women Against Rape) then take vengeance on male abusers. Rabid revenge flick by Zebedy Colt.

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS '76. Catherine Burgess. Jamie Gillis. Terri Hall. Beautiful blonde escapes boring aristocratic lifestyle when a demon takes her to an insane sexual hell.

TONGUE '77. Bridgette Maier. Al Poe. Mute with 9" tongue spirals down path of despair & violence. Brilliant, however bleak XXX Blacksploitation. Includes original theatrical trailer.

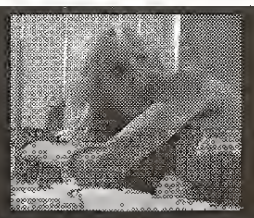
TIJUANA BLUE '73. Two bums on drug run become immersed in squalid pit of sexual depravity. Features ultra trashy & busty Mexican whores. D: Harry Hopper (Howard Ziehm)

TONGA-GOO OF LOVE & LUST '72. Surburban pagans worship tiki statue. With wild drumming muzak.

A WOMAN'S TORMENT '77. Tara Chung. Marlene Willoughby. Mentally sick female plunges head first into hallucinogenic mayhem! Bloody ax & knife killings, lesbian strangulation, body under the porch. D: Roberta Findlay.

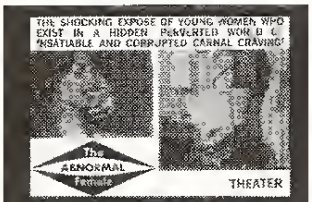
WHITE SLAVERS '74. Nasty dominatrix shows off huge breasts & masturbates with Mexican bullwhip. Includes bonus shorts THE KIDNAP & THE RANSOM.

1960's & 70's SOFTCORE



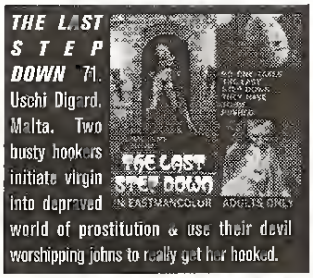
AUTUMN BORN '79. Dorothy Stratten. Young heiress abducted and sent to exclusive school of discipline. Ultra rare Canadian exploiter.

BAD, BAD CANC '71. Rene Bond. Rick Lutz. Weekend of sun & fun comes to grinding halt when filthy bikers kidnap two couples. Includes bonus feature **JOURNAL OF LOVE** (soft version) with Rene Bond.



ABNORMAL FEMALE '69. B/W. Pamela Berkeley. Jennette Foster. A Distripix release.

EVERYBODY GOES APE '70. Marsha Jordan. Marsha & big breasted girlfriend go wild when office coffee pot is spiked with sex powder!



THE LAST STEP DOWN '71. Uschi Digard. Malta. Two busty hookers initiate virgin into depraved world of prostitution & use their devil worshipping johns to really get her hooked.

THE MAGIC MIRROR '70. Uschi Digard. Maria Arnold. Uschi buys lust inducing magical mirror. She screws a t.v. repairman, a cop, a robber and frolics with feminists from the Anti Smut Society. Incredible!

BLUE SUMMER '73. Darcey Hollingworth. Bo White. Teenagers pack psychedelic van with beer and go on sexual road trip. An Allen Shackleton Production. D: Chuck Vincent.

MARINA '70. Athena Prezaki. Lisa Vern Older experienced couple seduce teenage brother and sister. Marina is a very busty brunette. American Film Distributing Corporation release.

EXECUTIVE WIVES '70 Capri. Lisa Brandt. Personnel manager throws wild parties & screws the wives of guys up for promotion. Features: GRETA–a busty platinum blonde go-go dancer. Stunning color!

MILLION DOLLAR MONA '72. Candy Samples. Sandy Dempsey. Wealthy socialite interviewed by hot young reporter...in depth! Contains brief hardcore scenes.

FUEGO '69. Voluptuous Isabel Sarli lusts for sex & suicide! "A surefire cult item (it's a favorite of John Waters)." – Michael Weldon. D: Armando Bo (Argentina's Russ Meyer)

SADDLE TRAMP WOMEN '72. John Alderman. Rene Bond. Sandy Dempsey. Candy Samples. Bounty hunters go after rapist outlaws. Rene, Sandy & Candy all play hookers! 1st time on video! D: Godfrey Daniels.

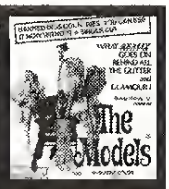
MNASADIKA '69. Uta Erickson. Lone man is punished for being rapist/killer by tribe of Ancient Greek lesbians. D: Michael & Roberta Findlay. Best copy available anywhere!

SEX & THE SINGLE VAMPIRE '70. John Holmes. Sandy Dempsey. Swingers visit house of Count Dracula. Hilarious!

SEX-O-PHRENIA '70. Rene Bond. Lonely housewife in need of sex has bizarre hallucinations causing her to seek out random sex acts.

SNOT ON LOCATION '72. Rene Bond. Sandy Dempsey. Rick Lutz. Cast & crew on location shoot screw like crazy. Sexy Sandy is 14yr. old hillbilly girl!

THE MODELS '74. Widescreen. Paola Senatore, Lucretia Love, Marie-France Broquet. An intimate glimpse into the lives of high class models, especially Beatrice, a beautiful redhead struggling with lesbian tendencies. D: Claude Pierson.



SKINFLICK MADNESS '71. Sandy Dempsey. Uschi Digard. Harold brings girlfriend to local grindhouse to watch skin flicks! At first she's timid, but then she's so turned on they do it right in the theater!

PANORAMA BLUE '74. Rene Bond. Uschi Digard. Sandy Dempsey. Cyndee Summers. Rick Cassidy. John Holmes. PANORAMA BLUE is a 70mm, 4 track stereophonic, color sextravaganza! It's the first "X" rated, hard ticket, road show attraction. D: Alan Roberts.

STRANGE VENGEANCE OF ROSALIE '72. Bonnie Bedelia. Ken Howard. Anthony Zerbe. Ignorant teenage girl lures traveling salesman to her desert shack for an education in twisted sex. Zerbe is a scuzzy biker who torments them both.

THE SCAVENGERS '69. John Bliss. Maria Lease. Uschi Digard. Renegade Confederates plot to steal Union gold shipment. En route they take over a saloon, screw the prostitutes and rape the owner's wife. An excellent, bloody western from Cresse/Frost.

CONFESSIONS OF A YOUNG AMERICAN HOUSEWIFE 1974. 83m. Jennifer Welles. Chris Jordan. Rebecca Brooke. Repressed mother visits sexually liberated daughter living "couples" lifestyle. D: Joe Sarno.

DOMINATORS-V.2. 1970-79. 92m. Rene Bond. Beautiful women in high heels, colorful garters & panties dominate their lowly female & male slaves. Rare loops include: THE AUCTION, CORDS OF PLEASURE, TAMING OF KURT, 1st DAY AT SCHOOL SURPRISE. A very cruel Rene torments her lovely young slave girl in IT TOOK A THIEF.

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SHARP RELIEF

TAVIS by RIKER

Welcome to the first installment of SHARP RELIEF, a 'shockingly' new addition to the unending search for the weird and whacked variety of film and video that *is* SHOCK CINEMA. you'll soon see that the accent here is on music-related oddities, although after sitting through some of *these* "musical" subjects, long periods ot silence and tresh air were required (well, a 10-minute stretch)

As a public service, the first question this column will answer is "What are Scopitones?" Well kiddies, if you're refernng to a delirious series of short music films made in the '60s, to be played on jukebox-style players, I'll be happy to fill you in

The tirst selection in **SCOPITONE MANIA! VOLUMES 1 and 2 (Gary Balaban, 182 Jackson Street, Brooklyn, NY 11211. $25 ppd. apiece - $45 ppd. for both - money orders only)** brings you poolside to a "Dance Party" the likes ot which make Elvis' worst Hawaiian escapades look like Bob Fosse. Yikes! What we have are a jaw-clenching collection of mediocre and semi-mediocre French and American pop "artistes" crooning tor dollars in a one-take, one-camera gambit for your hard-earned quarters. Color me ecstatic!

What makes this compilation better than a channel-surfing collision with "8-Track Flashback," you ask? Well, other than not having to put up with truncated excuses for "archival" clips and smarmy succession of has-been hosts, plenty. Can you say "dementia on a shoestring"? Be the first pop fan on your block who can sing along with "Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weeny, Yellow Polka-Dot Bikini" in *French*! Check out what an imaginative cameraman can do with a carnival ride and some swingin' gals in wide skirts! *With* Françoise Hardy sullenly strolling by, crooning Jacques Brel! Confuse your party guests with a bewildering array of dance crazes best left behind at "Le Disco"!

And now, the symbolism. In between the shimmies and the coco-pops you get an eyeful ot surreal sets, wink-wink, shove-shove camera angles, and Emma Peel/Modesty Blaise-approved party-girl fashions. And step right up, voyeurs and fetish-freaks! These Scopitones sure hit the spot, if your thing is say, keyhole hijinks as the sexy jazz chanteuse shows off her wonderbra in a sleeping car on the "Night Train" (as her band piles up Marx Bros. style right outside). We also glimpse an eye-opening assortment of high heels and Beatle boots (always attached to a swiveling, gyrating Scopitone dancer). Needless to say, **SCOPITONE MANIA!, VOL. 1 AND 2** (#3 is on the way!) are party favorites of the weirdest order. Guaranteed to bring your more self-absorbed "who wants to want *videos?*" types around to gaze (laugh?) in amazement at these totally original artifacts of the pre-MTV scene

Now stop the Wayback Machine at year '70 for the "variety" special that definitely pins the needles on the "groovy" meter! When **THE FIFTH DIMENSION TRAVELING SUNSHINE SHOW** rolls into town (actually, this 'caravan' doesn't really *roll*, but the cameras move around a bit), 60 minutes with the "Fab Fifth" and friends kicks the '60s pop music mojo into high gear. The guest list runs trom the A-List (The Carpenters and Bacharach-era, pre-psychic Dionne Warwick) to A.A. (Merle "Where's the bar?" Haggard).

Tonight, Raquel Welch entertains Bob Hope, John Wayne, Tom Jones

(and vice versa)

You're invited!

"RAQUEL" 9PM, CBS 2

Our "Rainbow and Stars"-style motif has the 5-D's as soulful gypsies broken down on the road (what better way to introduce guests with the 'crystal ball' segue device, sing the inevitable 'rainmaker' production number, and enlist the help of, um, Carpenters), traveling from one "Flip Wilson Show" set to another, in search of more nifty medleys and midriff-challenging fashions. Stops along the way include Merle's "community service" segment and the operatic detour featuring Ron Townson, the heftiest Dimensioner, in "Pagliacci" (?). Wrap it all up with a mirrorball and a Vegas-style hits medley that'll have you up, up, and away looking for the slot machines and blackjack tables!

Now the Wayback Machine gets stuck in between dimensions in "wack" mode when teen fantasy and tone-deaf reality collide in **RAQUEL**. This lavishly filmed (no Flip Wilson sets here), globe-hopping, flower power hour, originally telecast in April 1970, gives us Raquel Welch "around the world," crooning K-Tel renditions of '60s pop anthems while cavorting in various Bob Mackie fashions (such as the op-art BARBARELLA flashback in the middle ot "California Dreaming"). With the sound turned down, you can almost hear the collective slamming shut of bathroom doors in adolescent boys' homes as Raquel reminds us why she was the biggest sex symbol of the "Age of Aquarius." She also reminds us why she never had a career as a singer as she slaughters hit after hit in picturesque locales worldwide.

The ladies also 'get some' when lean and mean Tom Jones (and his sideburns) arrives to serenade Raquel and hit "Club EuroTrash" for a medley of "Lucille / Tutti Fruitt" rock chestnuts. *Now* your pain threshold is tested as John Wayne (?) pops by for a soggy "Hannie Caulder meets Rooster Cogburn on the backlot" segment, and joins Raquel as "ambassador of peace" on a missionary mistake in Mexico (aren't *we* lucky?) Now is it me, or didn't *every* variety show do a comedy sketch of "Rocky Raccoon"? Well, ol' Bob Hope didn't want to avoid this well-paved territory, so get your coonskin hat and cap guns (and she does her "Mae West" madam routine for good measure. And it that wasn't enough (please!), we get documentary segments of "Raq" as she "meets the press." Think Maysles Brothers after shock therapy or power tool mishap.

So a big "thumbs aloft" to View Video of NYC for excavating these two artifacts in their untruncated glory. Next issue join us to bravely go where many men (and very few women) have gone before—the '70s progressive rock graveyard!

[Send any Ideas - Comments - Suggestions to SHOCK CINEMA, Dept. Sharp Relief, P.O. Box 518, Peter Stuyvesant Station, New York, NY 10009]

UNDERGROUND ODDITIES

I'M NOT FASCINATING—THE MOVIE! (1996).
[Peeling Eyeball Productions, P.O. Box 460472, San Francisco, CA 94146]
The short pics of Danny Plotnick have always been faves, and this 50 minute, Super-8 extravaganza is his finest, funniest work yet, following a real-life SF band called The Icky Boyfriends on their fictional rollercoaster ride—from poverty, to the possibility of a little less poverty, and back to just plain poverty again. The band consists of Anthony Bedard (who also co-scripted, with Plotnick) on drums, Shea Bond on guitar and limp-afro'ed white boy Jonathan Swift on vocals. These guys make Spinal Tap look like valedictorians. They make The Monkees look like real musicians. They even make Dee Snyder of Twisted Sister look like a ladies' man. When the film begins, The Icky Boyfriends are local nobodys—and when a record store accidentally receives 100 of their singles, they have to foist 'em onto the gullible female customers. I don't know if these guys actually have a following or not in their home town, but as far as I can tell they SUCK! I'd rather listen to the entire discography of Ray Stevens than these clowns. And obviously, their (meager) audience shares the same opinion, since they're fond of pelting them with garbage. By day, Bedard and Bond teach lame comedy classes to a bunch of pathetic slobs, they're dumped by their girlfriends, and find time to suddenly (and hilariously) break into song at every turn. But everything changes when they get a record contract from a scummy fly-by-night producer, and though the pic is a little slow to get rolling, it hits its stride in the second half, complete with a dim-witted focus group, and an image makeover of the most radical kind. More than just a string of cheap laughs, this pic reeks of garage band reality and the lowest rungs of the music scene, standing proudly alongside DESPERATE TEENAGE LOVEDOLLS as a caustically clever portrait of Alternative Band Hell.

(THE ELABORATE) EMPIRE OF ACHE (1996).
[Blessed Elysium Productions, P.O. Box 278, Prince Street Station, New York, NY 10012-0005]
Several issues ago, I raved about Lisa Houle's underground feature, PUSSBUCKET. Since then, she's gotten married (hence the name change, to Lisa Hammer) and released several short films, including NOT FAREWELL, SWEET FLESH and JORINDA AND JORINGEL (based on a Brothers Grimm tale). Her latest is this gorgeously-lensed, 10-minute, cinematic fantasy, brimming with delirious high style. Illustrator Dame Darcy (*Meat Cake*) stars as Clara One-Arm, an overwrought young woman who's trapped in her room and tormented by a trio of puppets, a ghost from her past, and a crazed nurse (Kathryn Briggs Hoyer) brandishing a monstrous needle. Wishing to escape her fate, she listens to a talking plateful of meat—and wait until you meet her saviors, Queen Burr and her back-up band, consisting of Big Billy and Melon E. Wow! All of this is shot like some psychotic's vision of a '20s silent movie, complete with tinted stock, beautifully expressionistic sets, and an appropriately eerie soundtrack by Eric Hammer. At the forefront, Darcy transforms herself into a genuinely deranged heroine. Looking like a cross between Mary Pickford and Courtney Love, she fearlessly mugs for the camera and sucks us into her dementia---as does Lisa Hammer, who proves she's one of the most imaginative directors on the NYC indie scene. Brimming with humor and madness, this is a dream made flesh, as well as one of my favorite new short films.

LIMP FANGS: THE ADVENTURES OF COUNT MALT LIQUELA (1996).
[Christopher Michael, 2260 N. Cahuenga Blvd., Suite 306, Los Angeles, CA 90068. $20 + $5 postage]
Director-writer Christopher Michael (TERROR OF BLOOD GYM) moves into feature-length territory with this indie horror-comedy. Never one to pass up the spotlight, he even stars as Count Lamont Malt Liquela, who's awoken from a century-old sleep when a wino inadvertently pisses on his coffin. Sure, we've all seen plenty of cinema vampires recently, but this BLACULA-style barfly is far from the usual undead, since he "gots to" have his malt liquor—in particular, Creeper Premium Ale. The Count's problems begin when he seduces a willing young lass, because when he tries to put the bite on her, his fang is so limp that he can't finish the job. For advice, he goes to Count Falstaff, an out-of-the-closet vampire celebrity. Unfortunately, Falstaff's only worry is that Liquela could give modern-day bloodsuckers a bad rep. The story rambles along, but it's an often appealing mess—full of artificial fangs, equally-artificial breasts, far-from-subtle gags, and even a stripper nun. 96 minutes of this nonsense is a bit much, mind you, but it certainly has its moments, such as when our cool ghoul buys off a couple cops with a case of "delectable" malt liquor. There are also some hilarious continuity fuck ups, such as a model who's wearing either a see-thru top or a bra, depending on the shot. Best of all, Michael's inspired performance is the centerpiece of this off-the-wall homage, and I loved how the guy sleeps in his coffin with a stuffed vampire doll. He even wrangles a couple recognizable actors in (very brief) roles, with Reginald Vel Johnson (hidden under a fright wig) as Reverend Shields, preaching to a gathering of The National Black Vampires Alliance, and Charles Napier as a singing cowboy (performing the tune he did in the original STAR TREK episode, "Return to Eden") in one of Liquela's d t nightmares.

COLONY (1995).
[Tyger Brand Coffee Productions, 1929 W. Greenfield Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53204]
The genuinely creepy feature is an all-too-rare occurrence—a low-budgeter which not only revels in weirdness, but has an original, kickass idea. Admittedly crude at times, it's also equipped with solid performances and a driving pace. The tale begins with a romantic triangle set at a genetics design firm. David Rommel plays a sales rep for the company, whose wife (Anna Zizzo) works in the lab, on a repellent project that involves growing a colony of "co-existent parasites." But when she discovers that hubbie is screwing the firm's secretary (Joan Dinco), she takes hardcore revenge on the sleazebag, by

tossing an experimental, DNA-mutating chemical into his face. First the guy starts hallucinating, then his entire body begin rebelling--such as when his arm suddenly falls off and crawls away on its own! (Don't you hate it when that happens?) He continues to mutate at the most inopportune moments, of course, while compelled to get himself and his colony "something to eat,' which usually involves fresh human flesh. Best of all, this slimeball deserves this fate, as his life (not to mention, his entire body) falls to pieces. Enjoyably excessive, this combines the grainy sleaziness of '70s Deuce fare with the type of concept that could've easily turned up in an early Cronenberg pic. In any other movie, the rubbery FX would blunt the film's overall impact, but in this instance they're just so goddamned strange that you can happily ignore their cut-rate veneer. Kudos go out to director Thomas Berna and scripter Robert Gursha for creating one of the most ambitiously sick indie horror pics in recent memory.

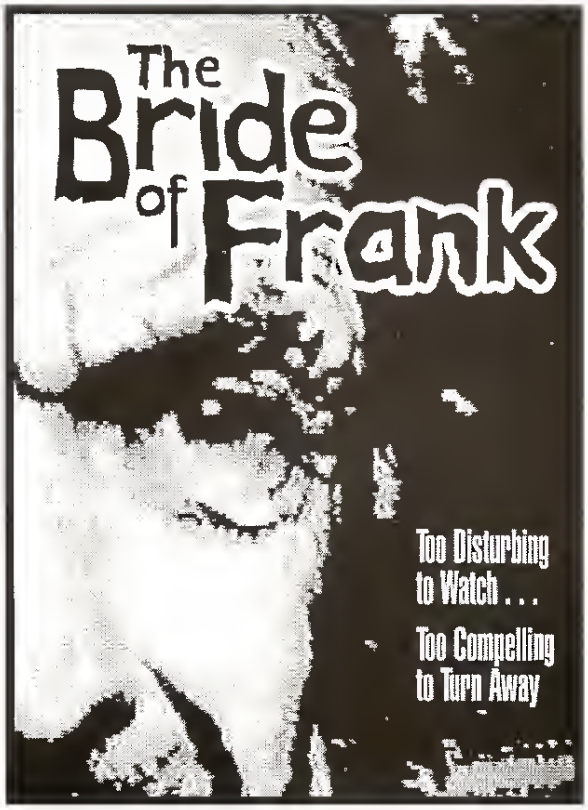
CUTTING MOMENTS (1996).
[Douglas Buck, 220 West 14th, Apt. 4C, New York, NY 10011]
This edgy film from writer-director Douglas Buck cuts straight to the heart of everyday madness. Without question, it's one of the most disturbing short films I've seen all year. Welcome to a seemingly typical middle-class family, consisting of dad, mom, and their young son. To call them dysfunctional would be putting it mildly though, because this searing pic exposes the dementia simmering under this suburban facade. Gary Betsworth is the cold, emotionless father who sits in front of the TV like a zombie, while Nica Ray is heartwrenching as the wife who finally realizes the emptiness of their marriage, and unable to rouse him, does the unthinkable in hopes of simply getting his attention. Buck gives the situation a methodical build-up which has you expecting the worst, but in this instance, when the shit finally hits, it's beyond anything you could've expected—and it's sure to leave even the most stalwart viewer cringing. In addition, the make-up effects were supervised by Tom Savini, and they're gloriously sick. He must've had a ball pulling off the type of work that he could never get away with in a studio flick. Above all, the cast brilliantly fills their emotionally crippled characters with an overwhelming sadness, which only makes the pay-off all the more disturbing. Though only 25 minutes long, that's perfect, because I don't think I could've taken much more. Douglas Buck is one fabulously twisted filmmaker, but he's also a genuinely talented one—creating a beautifully-crafted profile of a marriage left to rot, only to collapse in on itself. Heavy going, but I loved it.

ELECTRIC FLESH (1996).
[Sub-Vision Pictures, c/o Eric Brummer, Suite #120, 4000 D W. Magnolia Blvd., Burbank, CA 91505]
The latest from Eric Brummer (JOANNA DIED AND WENT TO HELL) is this 10-minute blast of crude, experimental animation. Essentially it's just a parade of twisted, ultra-violent, stop action imagery, and after awhile you get the feeling Eric's folks might've taken a bit too much home-made Acid just before he was born. We get faces eaten away, heads spinning about, eyeballs popping from their sockets, and as a finale, several figures are riddled with bullets until they turn into still-wriggling piles of goo. It's DAWN OF THE DEAD meets Gumby! And you get the feeling that Brummer *really* enjoys juicily blasting apart one figure after another. It's totally tripped out and briskly edited for maximum brain damage, along with appropriately abrasive music to accompany the visual assault. Sure, there's not much point to this dementia, but as exercises in gore go, this is a tasty tidbit, showing what the guy can accomplish on a minimal budget. Personally, I'd be a little scared to see what Brummer would come up with if he ever got his hands on some *real* money.

HELL'S PARADOX (1996).
[Contact: Tony Sassano, P.O. Box 2032, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163]
This 14-minute flick *moves*, and comes equipped with enough plot to fill a feature-length project. Even better, director-writer Robert Rundle has the budget and talent to go the extra yard. It's beautifully shot and edited, with loads of slick make-up FX and gunplay, while the story follows a quartet of bloodied escapees from Hell, who pack into a car and take off. It seems that they were able to ditch Satan's Cesspool by stealing some nasty-looking box which opened the Gates of Hell for them. And while three of them revel in their freedom and the chaos they're wrought, timid Rabbit (ooh, *there's* a subtle choice for a character's name) whines and worries. But fuck the plot, because this film comes heavily armed, with attitude to spare. These guys look like Soldier of Fortune centerfolds, and much of the pic has them blasting assorted minions from Hell, who want the damned box back. This is tough-talking, action-packed, blood-soaked fun, with high-decibel, unsubtle acting—that's because Rundle is so busy slaughtering demons there's little time to worry about character development or dialogue. The film even comes armed with some unexpected star power. THE ROAD WARRIOR's Vernon Wells is Ghost (and from the way he growls his lines, he obviously graduated from the William Smith School of Dramatics), while Stephen 'Geoffries' (FRIGHT NIGHT, 976-EVIL, and more recently, a bunch of cheesy gay porn videos) is Rabbit, who sputters so much who'd think he was auditioning for the lead in THE DON KNOTTS STORY...Complete with effectively grim sequences in Hell (which looks like an MTV-produced S&M video), there's little fat on this bloody baby. Pared down to its essentials, this pile-driver of a pic is in-your face from start to finish.

WE AWAIT (1996).
[Inferential Pictures, c/o Fireball, P.O. Box 642622, San Francisco, CA 94164-2622. $20 ppd]
Director Charles Pinion has already made his mark on the underground scene with TWISTED ISSUES and RED SPIRIT LAKE, and this 54-minute pic is his best, most playfully disturbing work yet. Beautifully edited and executed, Pinion also captures a genuine sense of nightmarish, societal chaos. It begins on a scary enough note, as Barrett (Pinion) sits glassy-eyed, in front of a bank of TV's, each playing some type of Christian flatulance—amidst his houseful of human remains. And once juiced up on these cathode rat crackpots, he likes to ambush and slaughter Bible thumpers. When Thomas Angel witnesses one of these murders, he ends up meeting the entire family, which is arguably, the most demented household since THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE. There's Uncle Jack, Xena, plus Josie and her heaving breasts (Alyssa Taylor Wendt). Best of all, there's the "dog" Kenny, played by Peter Weiss, who crawls about the floor in only his shorts, scratches himself, and even humps a guy's leg. As it's explained, "Other dogs are just born dogs. This one *chose* to become a dog." Meanwhile, Angel ends up tied to a chair and force-fed Uncle Jack's Nectar (a green, fungal goo, which the entire fucked-up family recommends). But the best is yet to come, as the whole family trips out and takes a "Spirit Drive" in their car, encountering a Godzilla-sized Jesus (transcendently played by David Aaron Clark), who's covered in bruises, blood and layers of fat. Pinion's imagination occasionally overreaches his limited budget, but the results are always impressive. In front of the camera, he's the perfect psycho, and he surrounds himself with equally adept co-stars. Of course, he also doesn't forget to keep his more deviant viewers amused with a smidgen of blowtorch-embellished S&M. All in all, a gloriously bizarre tale, drenched in gruesome tidbits and sublimely subversive hallucinations.

THE BRIDE OF FRANK (1996).
[Contact: Steve Ballot, P.O. Box 1348, Maplewood, NJ 07040. $19.95 plus $4 shipping]
This feature-length "story of love and evil" will have most average moviegoers throwing the video out of their window within the first few minutes. That's precisely why I loved it! Because few filmmakers nowadays have the balls to pull off this type of conceit. Happily, director writer producer-photographer Escalpo Don Balde isn't afraid to announce that he's one sick, talented fuck. This guy is a blue-collar John Waters, with a lead actor who's a cross between Chauncey Gardiner and Ed Gein. The opening sequence alone is enough to curl your spine, as Frank, an indecipherable old fart (hence his occasional subtitles) invites a little girl into his truck, asks her if he can give her a kiss, and tells her to shut up or "I'll run your head over with the truck." And sure enough, he ends up doing it! In graphic close-up! He even eats her road-squished brains! What an intro! But this wild adventure in deviance is more than just a gross-out pageant. Most of the time, our once homeless Frank works for a trucking company (where he also sleeps), hangs out with his warehouse pals, and simply wants to find some "big fat tits" for himself. We also go to Frank's birthday party (where his buds give him an inflatable sheep, then take him to a strip joint), and when his boss places a personals ad in the newspaper for him, many of these misfits end up dead at his gnarled hands. Frank is the type of guy who follows through on what he says, and along the way, we even see him *literally* rip off a supporting schmuck's head and take a shit down his neck! The most important question? Where the hell did this Frank Meyer come from? The guy is fearless (and often truly creepy). Whether he's scratching at his balls, cleaning tread marks off his undershorts, or biting a guido's dick off, he's the Edith Massey of psycho-killers. Plus, who else would skull-fuck someone on screen? In addition to its ultra-deranged edge, this is surprisingly well-lensed, with a large cast that isn't afraid to dump their dignity for their art. At its core, this is an intensely rancid tale of a working class guy's search for True Love—even if he has to slaughter a shitload of folks in the process. One of the most joyously abrasive films of the year.



WHAT ABOUT ME? (Provisional; 1992).
Rachel Amodeo's feature film has been making the rounds for quite a while, and it's about time I checked it out. On the surface this heartfelt tale of a homeless woman in Manhattan might sound like sentimental slop, but it's also full of gritty moments, technical savvy and an eclectic supporting cast of East Village regulars. Ms. Amodeo stars as Lisa, whose aunt dies, and suddenly finds herself on the street—dealing with a world of thieves, assholes and badly-aging poseurs. Topping it off, this gal also has the worst luck on the planet. She's raped by her old building super (Rockets Redglare), has all of her possessions ripped off, gets hit by a motorcycle, and is read the SCUM manifesto by some dykes. She even witnesses a Mob hit (which happens every day in the East Village). During her travails, aging LAUGH-IN veteran Judy Carne plays a homeless Brit who suckers Lisa out of two dollars for a coffee cup she doesn't even want; seedy Gregory Corso is a flophouse desk clerk, Dee Dee Ramone pops up as a nutty Nam vet, and Johnny Thunders (who also provides the score) is her out-of-town brother, Vito. Best of all, Richard Edson is Lower East Side perfection as Nick, a residentially challenged dude who become her ragtag beau. Lisa is such a gullible woman that she never earns much sympathy despite her spiral downward, which in the end, makes the film more honest than usual (even though it does get a tad heavyhanded). Amodeo also uses her Alphabet City locales to good effect, particularly the ol' Tompkins Square shanty towns (before the cops unceremoniously razed them, several years back). Throughout, this pic makes NYC look like the harshest city on earth, populated by total assholes—which might not be far from the truth, but won't have it winning any awards from the Big Apple Tourist Bureau.

CRINOLINE HEAD (1995).
[Tommy Faircloth, 47 Circle Drive, Cayce, SC 29033. $25 ppd]
Writer-director Tommy Faircloth begins his low budget feature like every shitty horror movie we're had to endure in the wake of FRIDAY THE 13TH, as a cross-section of college students head to the lake for a weekend of sun, sex and slaughter. But in this instance, it's *supposed* to be a comedy, while Faircloth makes the most of his enthusiastic young cast (who, for a change, actually look college-age, instead of in their mid-30's) and has an obvious love for the material he's satirizing. Once at their secluded old house, they meet Crinoline Head—a local psychopath who was institutionalized as a child for eating his dead mother, and now wears her old crinoline skirt over his head as he kills. This type of uninvited guest can sure ruin a weekend (even if it's impossible to be terrified by a guy with a fluffy white petticoat as a disguise). Could this be connected to the crazy transvestite they meet (and piss off) on the way there? It's not until the second half of the movie that Crinoline Head gets to work, which gives the viewer time to loathe these half-wits and actually root for their demises, including a goofy drowning in a (unflushed) toilet and a Yuppie strangled with his own sweater. Unfortunately, these folks are so vapid you wish the FX weren't so tame. The entire cast is solid, with top bitch honors shared between Tracey Powlas as Jenny, a whiny Valley Girl, sorority-type, and Cathy Slaminko as the appropriately slutty Trish, who embarks on the weekend with a skirt up to her ass and a purseful of booze. Aided by an effective score from Michael Borwegen, this is a silly send-up of a genre that certainly deserves it. Also from Faircloth is COOL KIDS HIGH ($10 ppd.), a high school flick starring a bunch of Barbie & Ken Dolls. Complete with crude, hand-drawn sets and a grueling, feature-length running time, the 'plot' encompasses a school election, drunk driving, a closet homosexual, and (in one of the only genuine laughs) a guest appearance by an appropriately plastic Vanilla Ice doll. So crude that you often see the hands of the people moving the dolls, and unlike Todd Haynes' SUPERSTAR (which used the same Barbie premise as a commentary on its serious subject), this pic is so sophomoric it makes SAVED BY THE BELL look like Sam Shepard.

THE STARSHIP PIDDLEY-SHITS (1994).
[Jason Lukianowicz, 4200 Westbrook Dr. #424, Brooklyn, Ohio, 44144]
This asinine spoof of B-movie sci-fi slop consists of three 10-minute episodes, each following a pair of planet hopping, pizza delivery idiots (Dave Benham and Jason Lukianowicz). These guys are so stupid that they'd give The Kids of Widney High an edge on Jeopardy. In "The Journey To the Evil Factory," they come face-to-face with an evil computer (actually, just an old reel-to-reel tape recorder), while "The Journey From the Evil Factory" has them trapped on a strange planet and meeting a primitive man in a backdoor-free loin cloth, who communicates by farting. In the final episode, "Adventure or Bust," the public tries to find the heroic Pizza Boys, climaxing in a lovely (?) close up of a guy taking a dump. This B&W space silliness features dime-store, not-so-special effects, model kit miniatures that would've embarrassed Al Adamson, and a spaceship console that's drawn (badly) with a magic marker. Although it captures the appropriately cheesy look of old drive-in pics, the humor is painfully obvious, and the biggest smiles will come from the type of accidental jump cuts that you only get when you're low on film stock.

DESECRATION (1996).
[Dante Tomaselli, 61 East 8th Street, New York, NY 10003]
This 22-minute work from writer-director Dante Tomaselli is a surreal, hit-and-miss horror pic. Unfortunately, once the visual appeal is stripped away, there's little underneath to keep you interested. The story is simple. While Bobby's Italian pop and grandmother are called into school to discuss his failing grades with the resident Catholic priest, Bobby (who seems *slow*, if you know what I mean) lays in his bed

for most of the pic, dreaming of his long-dead mother. While alive, she was a sick, abusive bitch, who tortured Bobby back when he was a snot-nosed rugrat, and now, she's returned as a loony-looking nun who wanders about, covered in blood, outside his bedroom window. That's about all there is, folks, along with plenty of trite dream imagery and slo-mo padding of our twisted Sister standing out in the mist (Scary? Think again). Admittedly, all of it is nicely lensed, and there are several effective moments—from the relative subtlety of cracked statue of the Virgin Mary, to the more demented sight of an adult, diapered young man, curled in a cage. But at its (unintentionally?) silliest, it tosses in a pair of court jesters, or the terror of a roomful of party balloons. The actors might be good, but it's difficult to tell with such flimsy characters, while Tomaselli works overtime to establish an oppressive, unhealthy mood, at the expense of his storytelling. He's right on one count—the idea of a ghostly, bloodied nun sounds like the beginnings of a halfway interesting script. Unfortunately, in this instance, that's *all* we get.

THE BLIND LEAD (Provisional; 1996).
This corrosive B&W indie feature from director John Covert plays like a cross between Raymond Chandler and Charles Bukowski. Soaked in nervous energy, this is hard-boiled dementia on a slim budget, as three friends crisscross the Northeast US on a road trip from Hell. John Harriman (who co-scripted and penned the original story) stars as Johnny Boy, a young Chicago playwright (make that "hack playwright," according to one hot-shit producer), who turns to crime after his play "Razor Cut For Beethoven" is an instant bomb. Grabbing a few bucks from a fat fuck, Johnny Boy, drug-runner Aristotle (Martin Bedoian), and J.B.'s actress ex-girlfriend Anita (Jennifer Shattuck) stuff themselves in a car, snort their sinuses full, and head east—with hopes of getting his crappy play produced in NYC. But along the way, a twisted session of Truth Or Dare gets out of hand, with Aristotle and Anita screwing in the backseat, as the painfully jealous Johnny Boy drives. From there on in, Anita become Aristotle's gal, Johnny Boy's old wounds begin to fester, and it turns into one long, abrasive, coke-filled ride—overflowing with mind games, whacked banter, a brainbead hitchhiker, and the ever-increasing chance of sudden violence. Though the dialogue is occasionally on the over-ripe side, all of the performances are appropriately edgy, and the stand-out is Harriman, who's perfect as this unsuccessful artist/freak! Don't forget the grainy photography for added realism, and you have a raw and riveting romp.

MECH-HEAD (1996).
[Contact: Kathy Barber c/o FSU Film School, A3100 University Center, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2084]
From my own past experience, I thought all undergrad thesis pics were pathetic chunks of pretension (or maybe that just applies to those made at Syracuse University). Nowadays, that's all changed, as this sci-fi short proves. Set in the near future, at an experimental (sorta) high-tech lab, a guy named Jake has literally lost his head in a bizarre rollercoaster accident (decaps happen that way all the time, don't you know) and even with a new, fully-metal head, he has memory flashes of his girlfriend. I know what you're thinking—yes, it's a ROBOCOP knock-off, but in reverse. And he soon escapes into the city, confronts his old squeeze at her job as a roller derby star, only to be pulled back to the lab for a quick, frantic finale. On a purely technically level, it looks terrific, with photography and editing better than most of the low-budget genre fare that inexplicably turns up on video shelves nowadays. But even though director Donald A. Guarisco tries hard, his well-worn material and over-the-top performances work against him. It looks good, moves fast, but at only 14 minutes, lacks any interesting characters and ultimately feels more like a fragment of a larger idea than a short film which stands on its own.

ALVIN ECARMA SALUTES THE TOBACCO GROWERS OF AMERICA (1996).
[Divergent Thinking Prod., 10708 Barnwood Lane, Potomac, MD 20854]
First off, pay no attention to the title. It has absolutely nothing to do with this short collection of crude comedy skits (of course, if the Tobacco Growers like the title, maybe they'll give writer-director Ecarma some cash for his *next* movie). And though appealingly subversive, this is also low on the laugh meter. In one sketch, a young couple copes with a Deadly Vomit Toxin, and another features the FOX-TV movie "Billy's Story," in which a son confesses he's vitamin deficient, only to become a "victim of a society who wouldn't understand." A real-life G.I. Joe saves two unsuspecting youths from a "towelhead" Arab workman, "If the Jesuits Could See Me Now..." has a cross getting blow job, "My Dog Has a Cyst" speaks for itself, and the best part is the cameo by Sean Connery (actually, it's just a clip from ZARDOZ). Partly lensed at NYU, this is laced with in-joke pseudonyms which no average moviegoer would ever understand, such as Cash Flagg Jr. and Lina Romay. Then again, no 'average moviegoer' would be caught dead with this tape.

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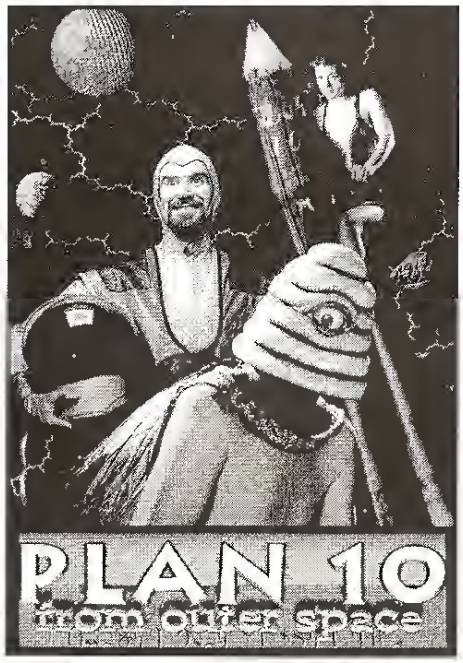
NEW RELEASES

MANIAC NURSES FIND ECSTASY (Troma; 1997). On the surface, this might look like just another Hungarian-lensed, killer-nurse, tits 'n'-sadism fest, but when the trailer delivers lines like "Their stethoscopes are cold, but their bodies are hot," you know you're in for another Troma pick-up of some crappy movie that's been mildewing in a shed for years (in this case, the copyright is from 1992). Evoking the spirit of cheesy, mid-'80s grindhouse sleaze, director Harry M. Love crams his 73 whopping minutes with increasingly sadistic set pieces, plus sexy nurses equipped with short skirts, big guns, and not a lick of morality. Lording over the bunch is the blonde, sex-crazed clinic commandant, Ilsa (Hajni Brown), who enjoys turning females into "robot love dolls." Then there's Sabrina (Susanna Makay), a comely lass who has a "special relationship" with Ilsa, and ends up the biggest basketcase of them all—strolling about in her Frederick's of Budapest wardrobe and machine gunning anyone in her way. There's also some meaty gore (love those exploding heads!), inept dubbing, and an irritating voice-over. Of course, it's stupid and inept, but with a title like this, what were you expected? Kieslowski? Plus, is it possible to dislike a movie that has a character impaled on a garden gnome?! From the producers of RABID GRANNIES, which says a lot.

PLAN 10 FROM OUTER SPACE (Leo Home Video; 1996). Despite the title, this isn't a sequel to PLAN 9. Still, if anyone could make a movie that dances on the grave of Ed Wood Jr's beloved chunk of shit, it would have to be director Trent Harris, whose RUBIN AND ED and THE ORKLY KID featured Crispin Glover in two of his most transcendent roles. Though not in a league with his earlier gems, this penny-ante sci-fi comedy still manages to subvert the entire Mormon religion. Stephene Russell stars as Lucinda, a sexually-repressed young woman in Salt Lake City, Utah. One day, in a lakeside cave, she finds the Plaque of Kolob (left there in a 1853 prologue), which proves that the Book of Mormon was actually based on sex-crazed spacemen, posing as angels. This jumpstarts her misadventures, which include a brother who receives alien messages after genital electroshock, Lucinda's awakening sexuality (thanks to her possibly-alien neighbor), and a secret club that she infiltrates by wearing a hubcap on her head. The plot is complex (and ridiculous), bouncing between moments of inspired lunacy and others which fall flat on their celluloid ass. Though only 80 minutes long, this is often slow going. And outside of a couple crude spaceship FX, it's also as low-budget as they come, with (obviously) amateur actors and plenty of local color. He also reels in Karen Black for a couple brief bits as the alien Nehor, the 28th wife of Brigham Young. She even gets to sing! Laced with many genuinely demented sequences and a marvelous conceit, this is a surefire curiosity for the terminally-stoned.



SEXUAL ROULETTE (A-Pix: 1997). Don't let the cheesy-sleazy video box artwork turn you off of this flick, because it's actually the latest endeavor from director-cinematographer Gary Graver—one of the grand old names of '70s sexploitation (that is, when he wasn't lensing pics for unknowns such as Welles, Cassavetes and Fuller). On the surface, the plot is simple and puerile, when a penniless (let's not forget, dim-witted) young couple visits Las Vegas and loses 30 Grand on a "sure thing" horse race. Oops. Thank goodness a rich blonde slut (Tane McClure) is after hubbie's body, and in a gender reversal of INDECENT PROPOSAL, she offers him 40 Grand to spend the night with her---only to lead him by the dick through a series of sexual mindgames. From there on in, it's any excuse for a lengthy sex scene—in the tub, in the pool, on the bar—I think they even do it in *bed* a couple of times. You've got to hand it to Graver. He knows what he's been hired to do, keeps it slick (with loads of atmospheric location footage), and disperses eight lengthy schtupping scenes throughout the 90 minutes (be sure to rent the unrated version). Best of all, just when you're convinced this is forgettable Late Night Cable fodder, the script comes across with some amusing plot twists and a lovably-cynical finale (which almost makes you forgive all its earlier debits). A pleasant surprise. Look quick for Ross Hagen as Marty, hubbie's agent.

THE ALIEN AGENDA: OUT OF THE DARKNESS (Brimstone Productions; 1996). In the wake of so many mega-budgeted, alien-invasion pics, it's no surprise that the indies would jump on the bandwagon. This pic, the first in a series, tenuously links together two different E.T. tales, and the results are inconsistent, to put it nicely. OK, I won't put it nicely, after all. The first episode, directed by Mick McCleery, reeks. Playfully lensed, but painfully inane, we flashback to how alien invaders infiltrated mankind in the '80s, plus a street musician who's wrongfully accused of murder and searching for his doppelganger. Wake me when it's over. On the other hand, Kevin Lindenmuth's entry is a much more amusing ride, with Sasha Graham as Rebecca, a homeless lass, hanging out in Central Park with a handy kitchen knife. Picked up by Scooter McCrae, she stabs him in the gut, he admits he's an alien, and soon they're a live-in couple. She doesn't mind that he likes to chow down on human remains, he enjoys the female company, and the two become the ultimate odd couple—right down to sharing Scooter's tendrils. Lindenmuth keeps it simple yet always intriguing, McCrae (best known for directing the zombie fest, SHATTER DEAD) is as effective in front of the camera, as he is behind it, while Sasha Graham continues to prove she's one of the finest actresses on the indie scene.

VAMPS: DEADLY DREAMGIRLS (E.I. Independent Cinema; 1996). People who don't attend horror conventions will never understand the allure of these indie T&A pics. They're cranked out with loads of enthusiasm (but in most cases, little actual talent), only to be hawked by some Scream Queen wannabee in a push-up bra, to guys who happily shell out the twenty bucks, just to talk to a non-blow-up woman for five minutes. Mind you, there's absolutely nothing wrong with this scenario if the film is actually *good*, and VAMPS (despite stretching a 30 minute idea into a 90 minute movie) has an unbeatable concept, loads of gratuitous skin, and a winning lead performance. Besides, you have to be pretty lame to louse up a movie about Vampire Exotic Dancers. It's STRIPTEASE with fangs! Welcome to Vamps, a classy strip joint (hence the tablecloths), where the gals moonlight as sexy bloodsuckers, led by club owner, Tasha. Jennifer Huss stars as Heather, their "new blood"—the cutest of the bunch, the best actress in sight, and (unfortunately) the one who also takes the *least* off. Well, at least she gets to do a routine in a sexy cheerleader outfit. Meanwhile, a young celibate priest (Paul Morris) is taken to Vamps by a rowdy buddy, runs into ex-high school pal Heather, and eventually disrupts Tasha's scheme to make Heather one of her minions. Behind the camera, director writers Mark Burchett and Michael D. Fox do a workmanlike job, while lacing the story with bare flesh and sneaking in a few subversive twists along the way.

POLYMORPH (Tempe; 1996). Hold me down, because J.R. Bookwalter has pounded out another one! Sure, it's marginally better than his previous dropping, THE SANDMAN, but on the whole, passing a kidney stone the size of a Chicken McNugget is more entertaining than this silly, unoriginal pic. The acting ranges from competent to *"please,* make them stop," while the plot is a cliché-fest, as a diverse bunch of idiots wind up in the middle of the woods, just as some alien Space Goo arrives via a meteorite and begins inhabiting various bodies (hence their glowing green eyes). First, we get some drug-runners, sitting on a stash of cocaine,

in a secluded house. Then, add a carload of younger, science-interns, who are there to help their (now dead) professor. The results are low on gore, thrills, intelligence, you name it; and the idea of ever-whiny Bookwalter making a macho action flick is as plausible as Rex Reed starring in THE CHARLES BRONSON STORY. While watching this slop, my wife put it best—it reminded her of silly, home-made videos she got suckered into while in high school, which always had a bunch of geeky guys running around the woods with fake guns. Low on budget, but high on predictability (not to mention, close-ups of bad skin), I'd mention some of the actors' names, but in hindsight, I'm sure they'd prefer I didn't.

HEAD OF THE FAMILY (Amazing Fantasy; 1996). At first glance, this sexploitation monster movie has everything you could ask for in a cheap video rental, from a murderous mutant family to loads of naked flesh. Unfortunately, director/producer Robert Talbot turns it all into a dull, witless exercise. The Stackpool family consists of four freakish quadruplets. Pop-eyed Wheeler has enhanced senses, muscle-bound Otis is the strong man of the clan, voluptuous Ernestina is a sexual dynamo, while Myron is little more than a huge, bald head which sits in a chair and controls the others telepathically. Together, they spend their evenings turning unwilling guests into surgical misfits, in hopes of finding Myron a body. Sounds like dumb fun? Unfortunately, much of the time we're following the stultifying sexcapades of a couple of ever-schtupping, white trash slobs, Lance and Loretta. And when Lance gets wise to the Stackpool's scheme, he uses them to get rid of Loretta's unwanted hubbie. The only recommended moment involves the family's home-brewed performance of Joan of Arc, featuring their braindead captives—which resembles a Troma version of MARAT/SADE. The rest of the time this germ of a good idea is left to rot, with a dirge-like pace, terrible acting, and uninteresting sex scenes. Following in the illustrious footsteps of Ed Wood Jr, the cheap walls visibly shake when someone bumps into them.

OTHER FLICKS: A white-trash take on Red Riding Hood, **FREEWAY (Republic; 1996)** is one of the nastiest, funniest movies of last year, with Reese Witherspoon as a foul-mouthed teen who ditches town when her crackwhore mom is busted. But on her way to grandma's, she's picked up by Kiefer Sutherland as a clean-cut psycho who wants to rid the world of "garbage people." This is a career-making role for Witherspoon---she's sexy, rude, violent, and doesn't take shit from anyone. Co-starring Brooke Shields as Kiefer's bitch missus, this cross between HEATHERS and NATURAL BORN KILLERS is lurid, bloody fun. Here's an early bet on a pic due for cult movie fame—**LOVE GOD**, from director Frank Grow, previously known for his short film, RED & ROSY. I'll do a longer review when it's closer to being released, but lemme tell you, this pic will send most viewers reeling from its hallucinatory edge. This urban, comic nightmare stars Will Keenan (TROMEO AND JULIET) as a recent discharge from the County Mental Health hospital, and his misadventures with various NYC basketcases, an obsessed doctor, a serial killer prostitute, and (primarily) an escaped, parasitic monster which transforms humans into walking blobs of twisted flesh. Though its hand-held camerawork will have some viewers fighting over the Dramamine, Grow's perverse storytelling and an expert ensemble cast make this one a mind-warped winner. The US version of NIGHTWATCH, starring Nick Nolte and Patricia Arquette, will be hitting theatres soon, but it's a shame that few Americans will have the opportunity to see the original Danish version, **NATTEVAGTEN (Luminous; 1994)**. At least Miramax hired the same director, Ole Bornedal, as well as some of his old crew, for this Anglo remake. Still, considering the US's homogenized sensibilities, I can't imagine it being better than this solid, twisting thriller, revolving around a law student who takes a night job at a hospital morgue, and ends up accused of a series of serial sex-murders. Equipped with a cool sense of suspense, hints of necrophilia, and loads of morgue induced creepiness, this unsettling yarn has only one flaw—all the characters are assholes!... In **THE STENDHAL SYNDROME (1996)**, Dario Argento returns to his giallo roots, with a psycho drama full of surreal touches and over-the-top violence. Asia Argento stars as young policewoman who becomes the prey of a serial rapist/killer, and goes increasingly off the deep end in the process. The script's predictability keeps it from being one of Argento's better works, but it's also fluidly directed, with expert Guiseppe Rotunno photography. Unfortunately, when the film has its long overdue release in the US, it'll probably be hacked of its most deliriously gruesome imagery. Asia is fine (yet gives her best perfs outside of her pop's pics, such as in QUEEN MARGOT), and the fact she receives the most abuse--including two unnerving rapes---makes you wonder a little about her dad.

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- ☐ Delinquent Schoolgirls ('74) Michael Pataki
- ☐ Demon Rage (80) Britt Ekland John Carradine
- ☑ The Demons (72) Sex-crazed nuns! J. Franco dir
- ☐ The Devil Doll ('64/UK) Yvonne Romain,
- ☐ Die Monster Die (65/UK/AIP) Boris Karloff
- ☑ Don t Go Near the Park (81) Linnea Quigley
- ☐ Double Agent 73 ('74) Chesty Morgan is huge!
- ☐ Dracula Erotica ('80/ X) Samantha Fox V. del Rio
- ☐ Dracula Sucks (79) X version/Uncut Adult
- ☐ Eroticize (83) Nude aerobics w/Kitten Natavidad
- ☐ Evils of the Night (85)J Newmar T Louise, J Carradine
- ☐ Famous T & A (82) Sybil Danning & nude clips
- ☑ Flesh Feast ('70) Veronica Lake's last film
- ☐ Forbidden Zone (80) Susan Tyrrell H Villechaize
- ☑ Forced Entry (75) Tanya Roberts Nancy Allen
- ☐ Frogs ('72/AIP) Ray Milland Sam Elliott
- ☐ Fruits of Passion (81) ' Story of O' continues
- ☐ The G I. Executioner (71) Angelique Pettyjohn
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- ☑ Grave of the Vampire (72) Michael Pataki
- ☐ Homicidal (61) Jean Arless William Castle directs
- ☐ Horror of the Blood Monsters (70)Al Adamson dir
- ☐ House of Whipcord (74) Peter Walker directs
- ☑ Ilsa, the Wicked Warden (75) Dyanne Thorne
- ☐ Inside Desiree Cousteau (79/X) costars Serena
- ☐ Invasion of the Bee Girls (73) Victoria Vetri
- ☑ I Spit on your Grave ('78) Camille Keaton
- ☐ Kronos ('57) Jeff Morrow Barbara Lawrence
- ☐ Lady Stay Dead ('83/Austr) Gory psycho on the loose!
- ☐ The Loves of Irina ('73) Uncut X Jess Franco dir
- ☑ Make Them Die Slowly (80/Italian) U Lenzi dir
- ☑ Mark of the Devil (69) Herbert Lom Udo Kier
- ☑ Mark of the Devil II ('72) A. Dalfrino, R. Nalder
- ☐ Mr. Sardonicus (61) William Castle directs
- ☑ Ms. 45 ('81)Abel Ferrara directs Zoe Tamerus
- ☐ Ms. Magnificent (77/ X) Desiree Cousteau
- ☐ Myra Breckinridge (70) Raquel Welch Mae West
- ☐ Naked Super Witches of the Rio Amore ('77) Franco dir
- ☐ Nocturna ('78) Nai Bonet, John Carradine
- ☐ Nuns of S'ant Archangelo ('73/Ital /Libx) O. Muti
- ☐ Nurse Sherri (78) Jill Jacobsen Al Adamson dir
- ☐ Opera (88) Dario Argento dir Cristina Marsillach
- ☑ The Other Hell (80/ Italian) Possessed naked nuns!
- ☐ Perils of Gwendoline (84) Tawny Kitaen/Bondage
- ☐ Pretty Peaches (78/X) Desiree Cousteau classic
- ☐ A Place Called Today (71) Chen Caffaro L. Wood
- ☐ Robotrix (91/ X /in Chinese/Libx) Amy Yip
- ☐ The Rogue ('76/Ital) Barbara Bouchet, M. Lee
- ☐ Schizo ('76) Lynne Frederick, Stephanie Beacham
- ☐ Snuff (76) Alan Schackleton's banned uncut nasty
- ☑ S S Experiment Love Camp ('78) Nude Nazi torture!
- ☐ The Stepford Wives (75) K. Ross, Paula Prentiss
- ☐ The Stranglers of Bombay (60/UK) Guy Rolfe
- ☑ Street Trash (88/Unrated) Jim Munro stars & directs
- ☐ A Study in Terror ('65/UK) Holmes vs Jack the Ripper
- ☐ Superchick ('73) Joyce Jillson, Uschi Digard
- ☐ Sweet Sugar ('72/Uncut) Phyllis Davis behind bars
- ☑ Swingers Massacre ('72) Uschi Digard
- ☐ Tarts in Torment ('93/X)Bondage w/ Ashley Renee
- ☐ Terminal Island ('73) Phyllis Davis Marta Kristen
- ☐ They Came From Within(76) Barbara Steele
- ☐ They Saved Hitler s Brain (63) Audrey Caire
- ☐ The Time Travelers (64) Preston Foster J Hoyt
- ☐ Titillation ('82/X) A Pettyjohn Kitten Natavidad
- ☑ Tomb of Torture (63/Italian) Annie Albert
- ☐ Traci, I Love You (87/X) Traci Lords M Jess
- ☑ The Trip (67/AIP) Peter Fonda,Susan Strasberg
- ☐ Twins of Evil (71/UK) The Collinson twins
- ☐ The Undead (56) Allison Hayes R Corman dir
- ☐ Unhinged (83/Unrated version) Most Violent!
- ☐ The Vampire & The Ballerina (60) Walter Brandi
- ☐ Vampire Circus (72/UK) Adrienne Corri Uncut
- ☑ Vampyres (74/Uncut/UK) Anulka, M. Morris
- ☐ War Gods of the Deep (65) V Price, Susan Hart
- ☐ Working Girls (74) Cassandra (Elvira) Peterson nude
- ☐ X The Unknown (56/UK) Dean Jagger
- ☐ Zombie (79) Tisa Farrow, Lucio Fulci directs

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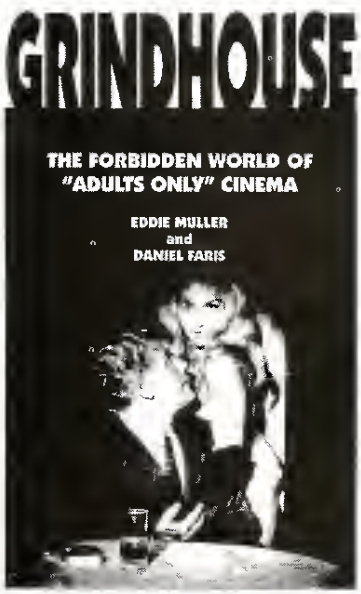
BOOKS AND ZINES

POETRY AND PURGATORY by Buddy Giovinazzo (Thunder's Mouth Press; $12.95).
Buddy Giovinazzo, author of *Life is Hot in Cracktown* and director of the soon-to-be-released NO WAY HOME (starring Tim Roth and James Russo), is back with his sophomore novel. Meet Eddie, our protagonist, who has an inoperable brain tumor and continually pops li'l red pills to relieve the pain. His sister, Denise, is a sicko dominatrix who comes up with a scam to blackmail her clients. Meanwhile, Eddie's new companion, Kaval, is HIV-positive, lives on the Lower East Side, and rips Eddie from his NYC environs for a hilarious trip to visit her rich folks in California. But when Denise is found dead in her 'dungeon", Eddie becomes a terminal cancer Columbo, looking for the guy who beat her face in with a baseball bat. Giovinazzo's strength lies in his ability to bring the grimmest reality to life and create full-bodied characters you might not care much for, but who almost always ring true. Oddly, the most dramatic portions occur in the sidelines---whether it's a twelve-year-old whore named CandyBar, or a lost little girl with a forgetful junkie mom. Zipping from Times Square to a pre-gentrification Alphabet City, from S&M performance art to after-hours clubs, these are the type of terrific (often cynical) NYC vignettes which could only come from someone familiar with the aftertaste of Manhattan's niches. Unfortunately, the central storyline is occasionally undercut by Eddie's nightmares and delusions. Though full of powerful imagery, they're often confusing and seem better suited to the screen than the written page. More focused (and also less disturbing) than *Cracktown*, this is another unwavering glimpse into the urban abyss.

GRINDHOUSE: THE FORBIDDEN WORLD OF "ADULTS ONLY" CINEMA by Eddie Muller and Daniel Faris (St. Martin's Griffin; $19.95).
I've got to hand it to St. Martin's Press, because after publishing Michael Weldon's new Psychotronic tome, they follow it up with this fabulous flashback to the age of the grindhouse---from its earliest incarnations during the '30s, to the glut of bishop-flogging pics during the '70s. Sure, this is a huge topic for such a thin book, but Muller and Faris do their best to condense a half-century's worth of cinematic sexual taboos into a scant 160 pages, with plenty of 'scandalous' ad mats providing the eye candy. One of my favorites is for the racy MONIKA ("The Devil controls her by radar!"), directed by everybody's favorite sex-fiend, Ingmar Bergman. Along the way, we get early permutations involving dope, marijuana, VD and prostitution, the European imports, including Brigitte Bardot's immoral influences; the avalanche of nudist pics in the early-'60s, plus brief sections on schlock pioneers such as Kroger Babb and Dwain Esper, to more recent Deuce-legends such as Doris Wishman, Harry Novak and Radley Metzger. Meanwhile, the best anecdotes involve San Francisco's Mitchell Brothers, a dip into the gay side of the grindhouse, and a two page detour into the amazing career of Timothy Carey! Best of all, Muller and Faris never take their subject matter too seriously, while their love and knowledge of the material continually shines through. If you don't already own a copy, count up your loose change and head to your nearest bookstore, because this fascinating book is an essential addition to any self-respecting sleazehound's library.



MONDO ARGENTO by Alan Jones (Midnight Media).
If you couldn't already tell from the title, this over-sized, 76-page, glossy mag is a tribute to Pastaland shockmeister Dario Argento. Of course, any hardcore fans will be snatching this up without hesitation, but I'm a harder audience to win over, since I've always regarded him as a visually brilliant, but often flawed director. In my case, the book has to be more than a simple, adoring ode---it also to be *good*...Well, this skeptic is happy to report that it's indeed worth a look, primarily because Jones has a brisk, ingratiating style to his writing, which loads on the facts, yet always stays reader-friendly. The book is broken up into short essays which follow Argento's career from its beginnings to the present, and is profusely illustrated with photos and old press materials. For novices, it provides a great intro to each of Dario's films; while readers who are sick to death of hearing about SUSPIRIA and INFERNO for the umpteenth time will enjoy tidbits about his forays into the spaghetti western market, his comic period piece THE FIVE DAYS OF MILAN, and (my favorite portions) producing Soavi's early pics, THE CHURCH and THE SECT [US: THE DEVIL'S DAUGHTER]. There's even a 12-page Q&A with Argento himself---who proves he's a little out-to-lunch by admitted that PHENOMENA [US: CREEPERS] is his favorite film. Splendidly designed, this avoids deeper analysis (a la Maitland McDonagh's *Broken Mirrors/Broken Minds*), and instead cuts straight to the heart of Dario's horror legacy.

BRIGITTE LAHAIE: A PICTORIAL BIOGRAPHY (Media Publications).
Anyone male who's familiar with the film career of Brigitte Lahaie will be slobbering over this 48-page booklet from the UK, since it's overflowing with photos of the blonde beauty, in every state of undress. Of course, most normal moviegoers on this side of the Atlantic who be saying "Who?"; and if they remember her at all, it's from Lahaie's small role as a slutty whore in HENRY AND JUNE. Still, if US scream queens can have entire magazines devoted to their surgically-enhanced talents, why not devote a little space to this sexploitation legend, who began her career by answering a want ad for "models with large breasts", went onto 30+ EuroPorn pics during the '70s, and later worked with filmmakers like Rollin and Franco (who, despite all their directorial inadequacies, prove they're got a fine eye for casting). More recently, Brigitte has released records, hosted radio shows, and stars in a French "CD-ROM erotique." This bio wants to have it both ways though, because while the intro by Lucas Balbo boasts that Lahaie has "escaped the porn-ghetto where the industry tried to trap her," the book's reliance on undraped pix of Lahaie proves otherwise. And if you're looking for any hard info, this is decidedly lightweight---the story of her career barely fills six pages of text, and while her filmography might be complete, it ignores important details, like telling us the plot of the film or what Lahaie does in it (of course, in most of her sex pics, that goes without saying). The best parts are the liberal quotes from Brigitte's tell-all autobiography *Moi, La Scandaleuse*, which, in the end, only make you wish the entire book was available in the US...Containing over 50 b&w and color photos, this loving tribute is aimed firmly at pre-converted fans, who already have a well-worn video collection of Lahaie's contributions to the wonderful world of masturbation.

VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS

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ALPHA BLUE ARCHIVES, Dept. SH, P.O. Box 16072, Oakland, CA 94610. E-mail: archives@sirius.com. A terrific collection of the harshest sex-pics from the jismhouse past, including softcore gems, nudie-roughies and vintage 70s porn starring such XXX icons as Vanessa Del Rio and Annie Sprinkle.

BLACKEST HEART MEDIA, c/o Shawn Smith, P.O. Box 3376, Antioch, CA 94531-3376. Shawn's extensive listing features some of the nastiest films on the planet, plus video dementia that'll have you laughin' your drunken ass off. $3 gets you his 65 page catalog, which includes amazing t-shirts and CD's.

BOOTLEG LIFE, P.O. Box 138545, Chicago, IL 60613. These video degenerates focus on the raunchiest XXX-pics from around the globe. Their "scatalog" is $2, and includes juicy descriptions of fetish fare like *Ca Ca Doo Doo Pee Pee #4* with Linda Lovelace. Please include signed age statement.

CREATURE FEATURE VIDEO, P.O. Box 602, Dept. SC1, Northford, CT 06472. E-mail: CFVhorrors@aol.com. A collection of all the hottest genres, including EuroTrash, giant monsters, and sexy babes---complete with full color boxes. Send a postcard for their complete catalog.

DUNWICH VIDEO, P.O. Box 577035, Chicago, IL 60657-7035. A gritty catalog featuring an array of skanky gems, including EuroSleaze, Asian action, Mondo pix, and some of the nastiest splatter available. Complete with full color packaging, their catalog is only $2.

JUST FOR THE HELL OF IT, Dept. SC, P.O. Box 19, Butler, NJ 07405. Incorporating the old Gore Gazette Private Video Library, J4HI features the best from the grindhouse era and beyond, including rare blaxploitation and sleaze. Only $3 for their hilarious catalog (checks made out to Mike Decker).

LUMINOUS FILM & VIDEO WURKS, P.O. Box 1047. Dept. AC, Medford, NY 11763. E-mail: lfvw@aol.com. One of my favorites, offering everything from EuroWesterns and pastaland gut-munchers, to arthouse fare from Peter Greenaway and Suzuki Seijun. High quality copies and full color packaging.

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SOMETHING WEIRD VIDEO, P.O. Box 33664, Seattle, WA 98133. A jaw-dropping array of grindhouse sexploitation and beyond, including low-rent auteurs such as Doris Wishman, Dave Friedman and Joe Sarno. Their mind-blowing catalog is $5. If you don't have one yet, what the hell's stopping you?!

STARLIGHT VIDEO, 8518 S.W. Tamiami Trail STE# 1335, Miami, FL 33144. This "altemative video source" sells uncut Euro-rarefies, bizarre horror, and a world of hard-edged sleaze. $3 gets you their catalog.

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NECRONOMICON: BOOK ONE. Edited by Andy Black (Creation Books; $16.95).
I have mixed feelings about this book. On one hand, it's an extremely well-written collection of 18 critical essays, covering a wide array of cinematic subjects---from Jean Rollin and Dario Argento, to films as diverse as BLOOD FEAST and DEEP THROAT. Still, while there's nothing wrong with intelligent analysis, many of these articles read like bone-dry, pretentious college term papers. Laced with footnotes (a 17-page article on Italian giallos has a record 45 of 'em!) and ten-dollar terms (THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE and LAST TANGO IN PARIS pieces both namedrop Jung and Freud during their intros), the resulting book is heavy on 'deep' thinking, but often low on entertainment value. Worse of all, much of the pure joy is sucked out of the films while under their scrutiny. The best articles in the bunch are Black's profiles of Marco Ferreri and "H.P. Lovecraft in Cinema," plus Leon Hunt's essays on Michael Reeves' WITCHFINDER GENERAL and Peter Walker's FRIGHTMARE. A severely mixed bag, this is nevertheless, a solid read if your braincells are starved for a little intellect, after reading one too many pulpy mags (like the one currently in your hands). Unfortunately, you get the feeling that if you were caught sitting next to some of these writers during a long bus ride, you'd wind up popping an emergency exit and leaping, long before reaching your destination.

BAAD MUTHA@*!#ERS (Midnight Media).
This glossy, 44-page booklet from the UK is a terrific tribute to the glory days of blaxploitation. Essentially, this A-to-Z reference guide covers the *Creme de la Deuce*, with 25 reviews from half-a-dozen writers (including DREADFUL PLEASURES' editor Mike Accomando, and longtime SC Film Flotsam contributor Miles Wood). Of course, I'm also a little impartial since (1) the blaxploitation genre is one of my all-time faves and (2) editor Paul J. Brown repnnted five reviews of mine, from past issues of SC. All of the bases are covered, from early grindhouse gems like BLACK CAESAR to new entries like ORIGINAL GANGSTAS, as well as some of the genre's most bizarre off-shoots, such as WELCOME HOME, BROTHER CHARLES (Jamaa Fanaka's killer penis movie) and ABAR, THE BLACK SUPERMAN (featuring a superhuman Watts messiah). Even if you're an urban action addict and realize this is just the tip of the iceberg, the writers keep their reviews interesting with their enthusiasm, humor, and brain-damaging devotion. My only complaint is its use of current-day video covers instead of digging up more original ad slicks. On top of all that, Brown wraps it up with a short interview with Dolemite himself, Rudy Ray Moore, and a Pam Grier filmography. Capturing the spirit of this whacked era, this is an cool little primer for black action fans and novices alike.

MAGS, ZINES & SMALL-PRESS PUBLICATIONS

There are plenty of terrific film-and-fringe culture 'zines out there, but I've only got room to plug the ones I get for free, and my thanks go out to all those generous editors. **Note: When sending for 'zines, try to send cash. Or if you really *must* send a check or money order, make it out in the editor's name.**

AFTER MIDNIGHT #10 (Tod Buttery, 5023 Hilltop Acres Road, Perry Hill, MD 21128; $7 for 2 issues). An old-fashioned, fan-oriented 'zine which focuses on older horror pics and their stars. Their latest features George Stover's story of working on *Dracula's Widow*, drive-in recollections, and a handful of video reviews.

AK PRESS DISTRIBUTION: 1997 CATALOG (P.O. Box 40682, San Francisco, CA 94140-0682; Free plus $1 for postage). This immense, amazing catalog crams its 144-pages with everything you can order through AK Press—from comics and 'zines, to small-press works from every fringe publisher. Of course, they stock my SLIMETIME book, for all you lazy bums who haven't yet bought your copy.

ANGELS IN DISTRESS #3: Cake Death (4100 Lake Washington Blvd. N. #B202, Renton, WA 98056; $4; website: http://www.accelnet.com/clients/angel2.html). This third, spiral-bound outing is split between Chris Campbell's whacked, 20+ page comic "Old Photos" and Greg Goodsell's cinematic views and reviews. The highlight is an amazing tribute to *Singapore Sling*, accompanied by insights from Greek director Nicos Nicolaides.

ASIAN CULT CINEMA #14 and 15 (P.O. Box 16-1919, Miami, FL 33116; $6, or 6 issues for $30). ACC just keeps getting better (the fact I'm now a contributor doesn't shade my viewpoint either, no sirree), covering the newest coolest pics to sneak across the Pacific. Full of reviews and articles, the newest (#15) contains a career profile of Sonny Chiba and a look at Japanese cyberpunk-horror.

CARBON 14 #9 (P.O. Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125; e-mail: carbon@voicenet.com; $18 for 5 issues). A slick, entertaining mag covering the best of our subversive culture, including indie bands (such as Neurosis and Babyland), bizarre fiction, tons of CD reviews, and interviews with Jayne County, Richard Kern, pom queen Tiffany Million, and Mark Pauline from Survival Research Labs.

CINELUST #1 (Mike DiRoma, 124 Jay Street, Schenectady, NY 12305; $4). This full-sized 'zine covers an odd mix of cine-material, including interviews with indie director Charles Pinion (from 1990?) and Jeff Speakman, a diary of working on *Carnosaur*, and several pages of eclectic video reviews. Fun, but lightweight—then again, it's the guy's premiere issue, so I'll give him some slack.

CINERAIDER #6 (Richard Akiyama, P.O. Box 240226, Honolulu, HI 96824-0226; $5, or $13 for a 3-issue sub). A digest devoted to HK cinema, with variety of writers reviewing everything from low-key dramas, to kickass action, to Category III titillation—rating them for both artistic merit, as well as their "Bumps and Bruises" quotient. The latest also touches upon current Chinese pop music.

DISTURBED #2 (Robert Plante, 115 Noel Ann Ct., Cary, NC 27511). A crude, but thick and info-packed mag, which spends most of this issue dissecting the biker classic *Hell's Angels on Wheels*, including filmographies of its cast and crew, and a brief Brad Johnson interview. There are also lots of 'zine and music reviews.

DREADFUL PLEASURES #11 (Mike Accomando, 650 Prospect Ave., Fairview, N.J. 07022; $16 for a 4-issue sub). This bloodbrother of SHOCK CINEMA primarily reviews all the wondrous grindhouse swill from the '70s and '80s, laced with amazing ads from the era. Full of enthusiastic writing and recollections of 42nd Street during its prime.

ECCO #21 (Charles Kilgore, P.O.Box 65742, Washington, DC 20035; $20 for a 4-issue sub; e-mail: killgore@ahoynet.com). This is one of the rare 'zines which manages to combine intelligence and attitude. Packed with well-written reviews and rants, the latest also digs deep into the obscurities, with 25 pages (nearly half the issue) spent on an incredible interview with C. Davis Smith (Doris Wishman's cinematographer).

EUROPEAN TRASH CINEMA: Special #1 (Craig Ledbetter, P.O. Box 5367, Kingwood, TX 77325; E-mail: 74563.1756@compuserve.com; $20 for 4 issues). Jess Franco fans will NOT want to miss out on ETC's first special edition, since it features the longest interview I've ever seen with the prolific Jess Franco. Conducted in Spain by Kevin Collins, it fills 31 tiny-type pages(!), as Franco discusses his entire career, his leading ladies, and beyond. Essential.

FILMFAX #59 (P.O.Box 1900, Evanston, IL 60204; $30 for a 6-issue sub). If you're a fan of B movies and fringe film, you've already got a sub to this great mag. If you don't, what are you waiting for? Each issue plumbs the waters for interviews and tributes to the greats and maybe-not-so greats of schlock cinema. While you're at it, be sure to check out their sister publication, **OUTRÉ (same address; $20 for a 4-issue sub)**, which focuses on even kitschier, cult media. #7 covers biker movies, Stan Freberg, and The Thunderbirds' Gerry Anderson. Amazing stuff!

GUILTY PLEASURES #1 (P.O.Box 7633, Olympia, WA 98507-7633; $4.95). This mag is sleazy-as-shit and proud of it, with editor Todd Tjersland diving face-first into the world of horror and gore. Articles include the undraped career of Laura Gemser, an interview with Bill Lustig, and cinema cannibals. Unfortunately, a third of the mag is taken up by dull, EC-style horror comics.

HEADPRESS #12 (40 Rossall Avenue, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 1JD, UK; for US orders: AK Distribution, P.O. Box 40682, San Francisco, CA 94149-0682; $7.95 plus $2 postage). The latest "Journal of Sex, Religion and Death" moves to a digest size, but is still crammed with deviant, always fascinating articles on Gregory Dark's Snake Pit, the art of skull-fucking, and "Pus, Boils and Sores: Bubonic Plague as Divine Entertainment." Get it!

LITTLE SHOPPE OF HORRORS #13 (Richard Klemenson, P.O. Box 3107, Des Moines, Iowa 50316; $7.95). This 130-page mag will take you a week to read, and is a true labor of love—covering *everything* you always wanted to know about Hammer films. Packed with meticulous researched information, in-depth interviews and terrific photos, this is a must-have for any hardcore fan of the genre.

MONDO CINE #2 (Roger Leatherwood, P.O. Box 10597, Oakland, CA 95610; $7 for 3 issues). Unlike most film 'zines, this digest takes a decidedly different path. One half of the issue features a long, technical (yet somewhat dull) piece on the various aspects of Digital Sound, but all that's offset by a terrific analysis of his two-day visit to the Cannes Film Festival.

THE REWINDER #2 (John Hudson, Box 148111, Nashville, TN 37214; $3.00). With the aid of some solid contributors, this 'zine hits its stride with its sophomore issue. Articles include a "southern cracker's" look at blaxploitation, holiday-themed slasher movies, and reviews of ancient, TV-show tie-in records (like "At Home With the Munsters").

SCHLOCK #23 (John Chilson, 3841 4th Avenue #192, San Diego, CA 92103; e-mail: newsline@thegroup.net). This "journal of low-brow cinema and culture" continues to entertain, with a lengthy look at the Herman's Hermits' film foray, *Mrs. Brown, You've Got a Lovely Daughter*, a tour of Hollywood Boulevard after dark, plus video, record and 'zine reviews.

SCREEM #8 (Darryl Mayeski, 490 S. Franklin St., Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702-3765; $5.95, or $24 for 4 issues: e-mail: screemag@aol.com). This slick mag focuses on the horror/sexploitation realm, with the latest featuring an interview with Bill Lustig (yeah!), an appreciation of Billy Jack (huh?), and Forry Ackerman's fave films (yawn). Of course, there's also a fine array of reviews, covering sleazy, obscure videos and books.

TERMINAL BRAIN ROT #8 (Mike Huegen, 7312 Reynard Lane, Charlotte, NC 28215-9061; $2, or $5 for four issues). The latest edition of this digest-sized journal is crammed with all the things responsible for rotting one's mind, including crappy videos, kitschy old albums, White Castle memories, and a hilarious rendezvous with a stinky, Lower East Side squatter chick.

UNCUT #2 and 3 (Midnight Media, The Barn, Upton Lodge, Hamerton Road, Upton, Cambs, PE17 5YA, England). Since the British censors are renowned for butchering exploitation pics of their violence, this cool UK mag dredges up uncut "video weirdness" from around the globe and revels in their depravity. Lovingly written, and packed with cool ad mats and gory pics.

VIDEO EYEBALL v.2 #6 (122 Montclair Avenue, Boston MA 02131-1344; $15 for a 6-issue sub; e-mail: videoeye@tiac.net; website: http://www.tiac.net/users/videoeye). An entertaining, informative mag that covers all the latest video releases and news, from new studio swill, old Tinseltown classics and cult fun. A slick package, full of well-written reviews and interviews.

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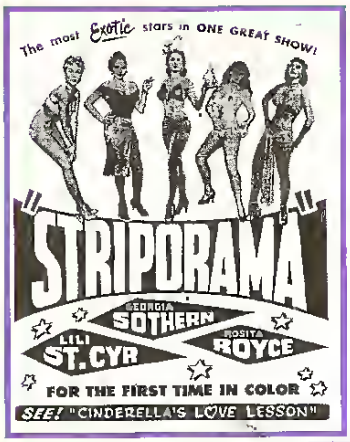

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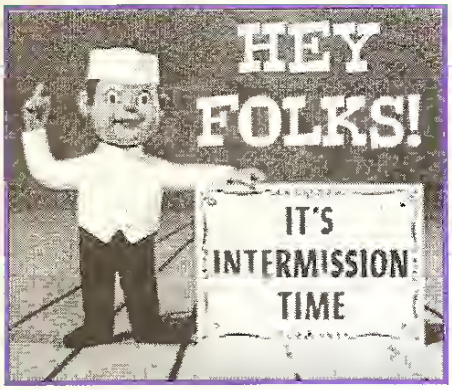

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